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N. A. Staples

WAY, TRUTH, AND LIFE.

SERMONS

BY

NAHOR AUGUSTUS STAPLES,

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WITH

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE,

BY

JOHN W. CHADWICK.

"GEDENKE ZU LEBEN."—*Goethe.*

BOSTON:
WILLIAM V. SPENCER.
1870.

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TO

FRED AND CORA,

TRUSTING THAT THEY MAY REALIZE THE BEAUTIFUL IDEALS OF MAN AND WOMAN, CHERISHED BY HIM WHO BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH IN THIS LITTLE BOOK,

I DEDICATE

WHAT I HAVE DONE TOWARD MAKING IT.

PREFACE.

THERE are three persons who, better than any others, could have told the simple, uneventful story of Mr. Staples's life. Of these his wife stands first. She would not have me say it, but I must. And I regret unspeakably that any distrust of her own ability or fitness should have prevented her doing what I am sure she would have done most perfectly. As I have talked with her about her husband, her appreciation of his character and work has seemed so perfect, her sympathy with all his hopes and plans so lively and profound, that I never shall be reconciled to her unwillingness to be his biographer and the editress of his writings. I am only partly reconciled by the consideration that she would not have told, as I must tell, or be no true biographer of him, what noble furtherance her husband found in her, what intellectual and spiritual companionship, what rest in weariness, what patient cheer in sickness and in death.

The other two persons are Carlton Staples, the brother of Augustus, and Robert Collyer, his friend. Of these, the brother, at an early day, surrendered his claim on this task to the friend, who went on year after year hoping against hope that the burden would be lifted a little and opportunity be granted for telling what a man was here. But the new years have only brought new cares, and at last he has felt himself obliged

to relinquish all hope of doing that which, with an easier yoke, would be the first-fruits of his leisure. And here again I am only partly reconciled when I remember that Carlton Staples would not have told how well he played a brother's part, and that Robert Collyer would not have written how large a place he himself filled in his friend's thought and life.

Among Mr. Staples's Brooklyn friends the desire for a brief memoir of him, together with a few of his sermons, has not diminished with the lapse of years. At their request and Mrs. Staples's I have prepared this volume. Should it meet with their approval, I shall be satisfied, for it has already met with hers. I even dare to hope that a few persons who did not know Mr. Staples when he was living may come to know him in these pages. I have tried to make such a sketch that those who read it shall declare, "This is no eulogy; it is the true story of a man's life." My gladness that my task is ended is tinged with sorrow; for the many hours of sweet communion I have had with this "son of man in heaven" have rewarded me a thousand times over for my easy toil.

J. W. C.

Brooklyn, November 25, 1869.

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NAHOR AUGUSTUS STAPLES.

I.

YOUTH AND EARLY EDUCATION.

NAHOR AUGUSTUS STAPLES was born in Mendon, Mass., August 24th, 1830. Jason Staples, his father, was born in December, 1799; his mother, Phila Taft, only a month later, January, 1800. Both family names appear on the first tax-list of the town, that of 1685, and both names figure largely in the history of the place. In 1868 Carlton Staples, the brother of Augustus, delivered an address at Mendon, commemorative of the incorporation of the town two hundred years before; and the poet of the occasion made tender and affectionate reference to Augustus, who, could he have been spared, would have added much to the joy of the occasion, and would have rejoiced in it mightily. For, as Carlton shows in his address, the traditions of the town are of no mean sort. It has always had a great deal of character and individuality. Once, too, it had magnificent proportions, but of these it has long since been shorn. A sad commentary on the "good old times," in which so many have such faith, are some of the traditions. In 1730, there was a long and desperate struggle over the location of the new meeting-house. But at the raising a

great effort was made to erase old differences, and a barrel of rum was voted and disposed of to inaugurate an era of good feeling. But the next day a town meeting had to be called, "to find out who by cutting had damnified the meeting-house," an attempt having been made with axes in the night to undo the labor of the day. The first minister of the place was a Mr. Emerson, the ancestor, seven generations back, of Ralph Waldo Emerson, with ministers all the way between them. Several of his successors were men of force and character; and in a time when the minister was much more of a social influence than at present, did much toward giving to the town a manly spirit. Like Jerusalem of old, the town is "beautiful for situation;" occupying a high position, overlooking lovely hills in every direction. Especially pleasant is the out-look from the farm-house where Jason Staples lived, and where his children were born to him. Augustus always took a hearty pride in the physical beauty of the place; all his life long went back to it with joy, and revelled in its walks and drives and views, and longed at such times to have his friends with him; would write them glowing letters, some of which, to Collyer, for example, are full of pine-scent and the smell of the ground. Here he would bring his wife, and never tire of driving her about the country, pointing out every spot that was associated with his early life, giving one reminiscence after another in his dreamy way, while the old horse, about which he used to joke his father a good deal, would drone along, often stopping to browse by the way without its being noticed. There was the rock he crept under the first time he tried to swear—he wanted to swear that he might feel manly, and he thought that God's wrath couldn't reach him underneath the rock. There was Mendon Pond, a

beautiful sheet of water; its pleasant banks where he had fished and bathed; its dim, solemn recollections of the eldest brother whose lifeless body was brought home from there one bright summer morning. There was the oldest sister's farm and home, where every thing was upon such a generous scale—in such order and complete repair, and so full of solid comfort; and the sister with her large, tender soul, always gentle with him, and ready to shield him from every annoyance. He never forgot his sense of desolation when this sister was married and went away from home; how he stole from home and went to her house, how she took him to her room, and soothed and comforted his rebellious little heart. There was the dark wood that had to be passed in going to his sister's house, and which his youthful imagination peopled with "gorgons and chimeras dire." There was the little school-house where he first went to school, and the big school-house where he did his first teaching, and got his first deep sense of power. All these associations, not very significant for others, were marvelously so for him, and grew more so at the last, when his heart went out as never before to all the old places and old friends.

Of seven children Augustus was the fifth. After him there came another Henry to take the place of the Henry who was drowned; and another Rachel to take the place of one who died. It was no easy living that the old people got from their farm. But there was more love than money in the house, and an amount of intelligence far in excess of the amount of culture, though both parents were exceedingly fond of books, and read as much of a good sort as their busy life would let them. The mother is still living, a tall, straight, noble-looking woman, as queenly a woman in

her make as one would meet in a day's journey, a predestined mother of prophets, wonderfully fresh at the end of her appointed three score years and ten, and well named Phila. From her Augustus inherited many a noble trait. The father died six years ago. In one of his letters Augustus speaks of him as "one of Nature's poets." In another, written after his death, he says:

"It will be a disappointment to me, as long as I live, to think that father did not come to visit us at Brooklyn. I have looked forward to your coming together ever since we have been there, and then to think that he had made up his mind to come, and then was disappointed, seems very hard.

"Father's life has been a very hard one in many respects. He has been a hard-working man, and has seen a great deal of trouble and anxiety, and has borrowed a great deal of unnecessary trouble. Still, the trouble which he borrowed was just as real and just as hard to bear as any other. Let us be glad that he lived long enough to see the fruits of his hard work, and to taste the pleasure of having all the money he needed, and, above all, of seeing a large family grow up to prosperity and usefulness. And yet, in spite of all that father has suffered, few men have enjoyed more, and few men have got more good out of life. He was for the most part cheerful, and always in the enjoyment of perfect health. He loved good society, and found a world of pure and elevated enjoyment in the hosts of good books which he was always reading. I have known few men who improved so fast in every way, as he has done for the last few years. It seems as if he might have enjoyed the next ten years more than any others of his whole life. Still his strength was failing, and he could not have enjoyed life after he had become unable to work. His great soul and noble mind never found half room enough to grow in here; they will now blossom out in all their beauty. We have every thing to be proud and grateful for in our father's life. It was so pure,

and true, and high-minded, and honest, amid the most trying circumstances, that I can not think of it without an emotion of pride and thankfulness."

Even more worthy of remark than the particular traits here mentioned, are certain others. Says one who knew him well:

"He was a remarkable man. I never heard him give expression to a narrow thought; full of real sentiment, he was fastidiously afraid of any thing bordering upon sentimentality. His feelings were very tender, and he would manœuvre in all sorts of ways, and put himself to a great deal of inconvenience to hide them. He was singularly unselfish and true. Had the most downright integrity of soul; could scarcely bear to be in the presence of a person whose *character* he disliked. Was perfectly independent of the opinions of others, and at the same time gratified with any true appreciation of himself. He did not go to church, because he could not hear any thing that pleased or benefited him. He was truly progressive. His sons grew up to his level, but never got beyond him."

In personal appearance Augustus was part father and part mother. But on the spiritual side he was in most respects his father over again. He was like him in his love of fun, and many a good joke did they crack between them. He was like him in his independence, and in his sturdy and perpetual discountenance of all meanness and wrong.

He was a wild, wayward boy, full to overflowing with life and energy, mischievous, and saturated with fun and frolic, much given as in later years to imitation and mimicry, for which he had great natural talent. This talent, of course, made him many friends. But it must also have made him enemies. Then he regretted bitterly his use of

it. He could bear enmity when it was drawn down upon him by any righteous indignation on his part, but not when it was the result of his thoughtlessness and folly. He was not useful or industrious as a boy, though he could work well on great occasions, but had a talent for shirking work and making plausible excuses. But his idleness was Horace's *strenua inertia*, earnest idleness. He might shirk the task imposed on him by others, but he was always pursuing some plan or idea of his own. He had an intense love of out-door life, and lived among the woods and hills a pensive, brooding sort of life, in strange contrast with the hilarity of his conduct with his fellows, and with much deeper joy. From every other sort of enjoyment except music, no matter how deeply he entered into it at the time, he would come away dissatisfied; but from his silent communings with nature he arose refreshed and strengthened. But nature served him other purposes than this. He had a great interest in all kinds of machinery, and was quick to catch the essential principle of any new invention, and embody it in rough imitations. The banks of the little stream that runs by his early home used to be lined with his dams turning aside the water to test the power and skill of his various contrivances. Adverse to all stated tasks, apparently because he lacked the nervous energy necessary for long-continued physical exertion, he could yet do harder work than others of his age, run faster, climb higher, and perform many difficult and daring feats. The secret of all this was ambition to excel or win the praise of others. He was, perhaps, too willing to attribute all the successes of his early life to the spirit of rivalry and the love of commendation. As he grew older he affirmed that but for his ambition he should have thrown himself away. But his deep

instincts of purity and spirituality, his noble dissatisfaction with trivial and unworthy pursuits, were, no doubt, greater helpers than he reckoned them. It was a characteristic of his whole life to underrate the motives of his conduct. For his undoubted self-assertion and occasional apparent egotism he made full atonement by an ever-present central modesty that nourished his character at its roots, and made him deal more sternly with himself than others could possibly deal with him. His dislike of farm-work drove him to shoe-making. But his recollections of that quiet, thoughtful occupation were never pleasant. He had a grudge against the time he spent at it as so much time lost, that might have been spent in the pursuit of knowledge. But he made friends at this time whom he never afterward failed to appreciate; and who shall say that this occupation did not foster, through its opportunities for meditation, a longing for that larger life from which he afterward looked back on it with indignation?

He was always a good scholar and stood well in the winter schools, where also he had the same dislike of regular tasks that characterized his physical activity. It was not till he was about eighteen that he began to struggle for a liberal education. Before this he went to school for a short time at Medfield; and a letter now before me of that date would recall to many a boy his first school days away from home, the first dangerous conceit of knowledge, the arrival of the box from home with a mother's love well stitched and ironed into the humble wardrobe, a father's thoughtfulness taking the shape of apples and the indispensable, too little valued, and too evanescent dollars. The real start was at the Normal School at Westfield, whither he went, through the persistent and disinterested efforts of

his brother Carlton, in August, 1848, with a view to prepare himself for teaching. Once there, his desire for culture increased rapidly, and he made rapid progress. At the close of his first term he taught a winter school at Uxbridge, and afterward went back again. On entering the school, he began to keep a journal, and with various intermissions continued doing so until his death. For the most part the intermissions correspond with terms of physical depression, or with periods of unsatisfactory work. When the journal is kept at all it is kept honestly. Nothing is written with the ulterior view of having it one day come to light. It begins meagerly and superficially enough, but soon broadens and deepens. The first series of entries only lasts about ten days and ends with a "Normal walk," preceded by "a feast of water-melons," the whole affair being recorded as "the best kind of a time."

But what is the meaning of the next entry? The date of it is October 8th, 1849. A change has come over the spirit of his dream. He has experienced religion! Painfully amusing are the entries in his journal and the letters home for the few months following. They make one's cheeks burn with shame for the dear boy, and with righteous indignation at the system that could instill such morbid fancies and hypocrisies into a fresh young heart. Here are a few samples of the "perilous stuff" that he indulged in at this interesting period:

"*Friday, October 5th*, 1849.—I have now in contemplation the unworthiness of such a sinful creature as myself, for now that my Heavenly Father has forgiven my sins, I have sinned once more against his holy name. This day I have done a little of something to save souls."

"*Wednesday, October 10th.*—I find it hard to resist the

devil that he may flee from me. He has so long had dominion over me that to prepare my heart for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is hard."

"*Monday*, 15*th*.—O my unbelief! I am so prone to sin; I have such a wicked heart that I can not lay hold of the promises of God as I ought. I am considering the propriety of joining the church."

"*Tuesday*, 23*d*.—I am nothing in the sight of God. My heart is so desperately wicked that my mind is continually wandering away from him."

"*Friday*, *November* 2*d*.—I have neglected writing in my memoranda on account of many doubtful and dark moments. Next Sabbath I expect to be baptized in the name of my glorious Redeemer."

"*March* 24*th*, 1850.—I almost shrink from the idea of placing my thoughts and feelings on paper, and well I may, for more than three months have elapsed since I last performed *this useful and interesting ceremony*. [Ceremony indeed! What has become of the fresh-hearted boy we knew a year ago?] And during this time God only knows the amount of my sins. I am not deserving the name of Christian. I have backslidden indeed. My closet duties are neglected. I can not enumerate the amount or tell the enormity of my sins. I will if possible form stronger resolutions and nobler determinations.

Appended to this entry are six resolutions. They begin drearily enough, but get better as they go on:

"Resolved, First. To read at least one chapter in the Bible every day; beginning at the book of Genesis, and so on in order. Also [naughty suspicion of the unprofitableness of certain genealogies and imprecations] to read other chapters more peculiarly suited to my feelings."

The second and third resolves are in the cloud-region of

pietism; in the fourth he comes down to the solid earth, and keeps there till the end:

"Fourth. Never to feel proud.

"Fifth. Never to tell what I have done, or to quote myself as good authority.

"Sixth. To refrain from unnecessary conversation."

And here the journal stops again, and is not resumed until the life at Westfield is all over. In this last entry the reader will perceive many tokens of returning health and sanity. Nothing had been written for some time before and nothing was written for some time after. But for about a year he kept up this "big play-actorism under God's earnest sky." Yet it was not all acting. Most of the thoughts, the very words in fact, that disfigure his journal and letters at this time, are the mere cant of the revivalist; but in the midst of all this rubbish there are many signs of such an honest personal religion as a boy may have without shame at the time or ever after. Among these are his fifth and sixth resolves, and such bits as where he says, "May I spend this day right at the feet of Jesus, and not be proud or *try to show off before people*." Do not these italics point at a real palpable devil, a devil with whom Augustus Staples had many a drawn battle before he had him fairly underneath his heel?

The letters of this period are even more painful than the journals, they are so unreal, so unlike what a noble young man's letters are, when he is not the victim of a false religiousness. What shall we say of the system that will permit—nay, even encourage a young man to write in this strain to his parents? The date is November 7th, 1849.

"I have one word to write, one simple request to make, and

that is that you will consider the anxiety I must experience in regard to your spiritual welfare. Believing, as I do, that those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will surely be cast out from the presence of God for ever, and it being my determination to stand at that great day at the right hand of God, can I see you thus separated from me for ever?" And so on *ad nauseam*.

"When I come home (if it should be the good pleasure of the Almighty to permit me once more to return), it would be very pleasing to me to have devotional exercises in the family, if there is no objection."

When he got home he read his answer and rebuke in his father's clear and earnest eyes, and no more was said about it. One can imagine the sad smile with which the father read these juvenile lucubrations.

"In your last letter it was stated that I had better not join the church, for fear that when I come home I might feel differently. Now this was the very reason why I wished to join, to *prevent* my ever thinking or feeling different."

And so the matter was now "settled," not, as he hopes, without due consideration, and his name "is now enrolled with those who are ready to die in Jesus's war." But many things that are considered "settled" get sadly unsettled in this jostling world, and young Staples found that even the snug inclosure of a church is no sure preventive against "ever thinking or feeling different;" that it was very much as his father had suggested it might be, and couldn't have been much more so if he had never joined the church at all. For no sooner did he get safe home again, than things began to take on quite a different appearance. In comparison with the love and rectitude and self-

denial of his parents, he saw his own external pietism sink into worthlessness. His old cheerfulness came back to him; his merry laugh rang out once more; the half-forgotten stories were revived; the flute that had been laid aside was hunted up; the feet that loved to dance right well tripped to the dear old measures, and he became almost himself again.

Almost, but not entirely. It was a long, long time before that could be said of him. The iron had entered too deeply into his soul.

During the year he spent in Mendon after leaving Westfield, he broke his evangelical connections, and became a member of the Unitarian Church. He also made up his mind to study for the Unitarian ministry. But it was not till he was more than half way through his course at Meadville, that he succeeded in unlearning what the Westfield revivalists had taught him. Long before this he had unlearned the doctrines of Trinity and Atonement and Depravity; but after he had done this he kept on trying to be religious in the orthodox way, and making himself miserable because he could not succeed, as we shall see hereafter. In one respect his orthodox experience was a great advantage to him in after years. It enabled him to speak of orthodoxy at first hand; and if, so speaking of it, he spoke of it at times with terrible severity, the fault was not in him, but in the system that had so marred his growth. His reaction from it was not sudden, but it was profound. A burnt dog dreads the fire. He hated it. He never forgot how it had unmanned him. He never forgave it that treatment. Perhaps in after years his friends sometimes regretted the way in which he buffeted the monster that had so frightened him in his youth. But perhaps, too, they did

not know what recollections edged his sarcasm, what gross imposition had been practiced upon him. Had it been a person he was dealing with, he would have been much more forgiving. But he did not think the command, "Forgive your enemies," applied to systems of theology that were the enemies, not of his fame or fortune, but of his life.

But it was a good day for the Westfield revivalists when they made a convert of Staples, such influence did he have with others, so intense was his ardor, so contagious his conviction. Years afterward, when he was at Lexington, one of the Westfield scholars found him out, and told him what a good and lasting influence his earnestness had had upon him. But it is quite terrible to think what a good revivalist he would have made, what multitudes of excellent people he would have convicted of sin, and enraptured with the promise of a future heaven much inferior to the present one they were enjoying before he met with them.

In estimating the value of this juvenile religious experience, it must be borne in mind that this experience was not the dawn of his religious life. Had it been so it might be more kindly spoken of. But no; the dawn had risen long before, and this Westfield experience was but a cloud that overcame its brightness, a cloud that held his sunny heart enshrouded in its gloom for years, which added to him nothing; all of the beauty of its own tangled fringes being that of the life behind them, a life it could conceal but no more quench than any cloud that vails the sun can quench its burning heat.

But whatever the Normal School did for him on his religious side, there can be no question that on the intellectual side he made, while there, great improvement. It

was there that he discovered that it was a joy for him to write. The "compositions" were no burden, but were looked forward to with sincere pleasure, and were written with all possible care. Having finished his course, he obtained a position as teacher in Mendon village. As a teacher he was eminently successful, and had great power over, and influence with, his scholars, many of whom still remember him well, and speak of him with deep reverence and affection. He seemed to instill into his pupils his own sensitiveness to praise or blame. His journal at this period takes an exceedingly practical turn, dealing with railroads, the world's fair, and state politics; showing a lively interest in the anti-slavery movement, and recording with admiration a saying of Theodore Parker's at the May meetings in Boston, wherein he told one of his fellow-ministers that he had the gun his grandfather had used at Lexington, and that if he should come into his house to hunt for fugitive slaves, he would do for him what his grandfather did for the British. The germ of his later radicalism in theology is in these sentences. For it was his absolute certainty that Parker was right on the slavery question, that led him to suspect that he might be right on questions of theology. His political radicalism in general was the vestibule of his theological radicalism, inasmuch as he saw that the hunkers of politics were too frequently conservative in their theology, and *vice versâ*, to admit of any doubt that here was no mere coincidence, but a truly logical connection.

II.

LIFE AT MEADVILLE.

The personal influences that determined Mr. Staples to go to Meadville, were mainly those of his brother, who had preceded him there by a few months, and Rev. Samuel Clarke, of Uxbridge, a man who recognized his fine natural talents earlier than any other person, and did more to inspire him with confidence in his own abilities. He watched over his career with a true fatherly solicitude, but was not permitted to behold except

"With larger, other eyes than ours,"

the fulfillment in him of his generous predictions of success and usefulness. Another early personal influence of which he always spoke with gratitude, was that of one of his teachers, Sylvester Scott; but this influence was upon his character in general, rather than upon his choice of a profession.

He arrived at Meadville, September 3d, 1851, and went to work at once with great earnestness. During the three years that he remained there his journal is almost never interrupted, and affords an ample index to his pursuits, his feelings, the sources and the measure of his growth. Other records of the same period are numerous letters home, the most of them written to his younger sister, Rachel, between whom and himself there was always a most tender and beautiful relation. From first to last his dealing with him-

self in his journal is frank and resolute. There are many passages which would not bear the test of the apostle: "So fight I not as one who beateth the air." A great deal of his fighting was of this sort. But it was real enough to him for the time being. And mingled with it, and every day growing more prominent, was fighting of a very different sort, with obvious faults of character, obvious to him if not to those who knew him from without. No one ever tried harder than this man to be religious in the orthodox way, but he was continually applying the test of his daily life to his religion. It would not be fair to take him at his word concerning his own growth in culture or in character. As the stars seem much more distant seen from a mountain-top than when we gaze up at them from the plain, so the greater his intellectual and moral elevation the farther off appeared the heaven of his hope and aspiration. In judging of himself he never seemed to consider—and it was best that he should not—that his horizon retreated just in the measure of his ascent. And so it was that while to others he was a marvel of growth, and grew more rapidly every year of his life, the very last being no exception, he was never satisfied with himself. He was beset behind and before. On the one hand, it seemed to him that he never could make up for his loss of early training; on the other hand, there seemed so many things to read and study, that a moment's rest burdened him like a sin. "Have done but little to-day, as I intended; but do not feel just right about it. It seems to me I never am in a condition that justifies me in resting." This feeling always haunted him, and often kept him at his tasks when he should have been in bed or in the fields. "If I can speak a word sincerely, or breathe a prayer in faith, let it be this—that I may look

forward to no life but that of growth, to no pleasure but the discharge of duty, and value every thing as it subserves these ends." With a great deal of approbativeness he was, while in the school, exceedingly sensitive to criticism, but he always received it in an admirable spirit. No matter how severe, unjust, or personally offensive it was, he turned it over in his mind and asked himself: how much of this is true? How can this profit me? He found it easier to forgive his enemies, than it was sometimes to forgive his friends their ill-considered praise. But if the desire to surpass himself was the tap-root of his culture, the desire to surpass others was his besetting sin. Again and again we find him speaking of it with great sadness of heart. But those who knew him best at this time, are very certain that ambition and rivalry did not play so large a part in his motives as he imagined. The desire to help others was undoubtedly the ruling motive of his life. But let him speak for himself a little:

"*September 24th*, 1851.—This is the season I love. There is a pleasant melancholy about it that sympathizes with the vein of sadness and gloom which runs through my nature. Few would believe this; but it is true, and I love to cherish it. When I am sad, I am happy."

"*September 25th*.—Have struck a dividend and find our board to be sixty-five cents a week, which is much cheaper than we expected. Met James Freeman Clarke; was much surprised to find him bearded like a Turk."

This meeting with James Freeman Clarke, at that time preaching in Meadville, was a great event for him. This good man seems to have a remarkable faculty for breaking up the great deeps of conservatism. Many a young man dates from some word of his the beginning of a progress

which can not be abruptly terminated. His influence upon Staples was very great not only in theology but in religion; sending him home to the solitude of his own breast, and making him feel that fidelity to self is the corner-stone of all true life. There was about him a preëminent healthfulness which rebuked Staples's morbid fancies with a silent eloquence that was more effectual than any spoken word. There came a time when the pupil, who was at first shocked by the radicalisms of his teacher, went far beyond him. But he never bated one jot of his reverence and affection, and to the very last emphasized many a lesson of liberality and love and courage with his name.

"*September* 29*th*.—The weather somewhat stormy, the sky cloudy, but storm and clouds can not make a day gloomy in which I receive a letter of eight pages from such a friend as Dr. Metcalf."

"*October* 6*th*. Have lived more as I desire to live to-day than on any previous day of my life."

"*October* 19*th*.—Completed the first volume of Channing's Memoirs. One of his most beautiful traits is his love for his mother. There is nothing in the history of any man's life that so wins my admiration as attachment to his mother. I hope to have the power, some day, of bringing religion in all its importance and beauty to bear upon the family circle."

"*October* 28*th*.—I sometimes think I am enjoying too much for a person to enjoy upon earth, and fear lest my Heavenly Father shall find it necessary to deprive me of prosperity, to give me the stern discipline of misfortune. May my only reason for desiring life be that I may be useful! May I have that patience, that long-suffering which can hear my most cherished doctrines spoken against calmly."

"*November* 1*st*.—Mr. A—— borrowed Mr. M——'s violin for me this morning, which was quite a luxury. I feel it to be

wrong that Christians, that any body can not enjoy music with impunity. Called on ——. Poor fellow, I feel sorry for him on account of his irritable temper. I think it causes him much sorrow. May I learn from him, as well as from my own sad experience, to guard well my passions.

"*November 2d.*—Felt how much happiness Christians sacrifice in remaining so nearly passive. There is more enjoyment in a single act than in a multitude of prayers without the act. This afternoon I have not improved the time as I ought; the shameful truth is, I ate too much dinner."

"I believe the true desire of my heart is to do good; and strange as it may seem, and contrary to many professions, I have never felt this desire before, truly. Mr. A.—— told me he had been into the jail formerly, and given papers to the prisoners. This seemed to open a new field, and I am rejoiced at the thought of having so precious an opportunity for doing good. Here I trust I may labor unknown to any one but Him who is the prisoner's friend. I pray God to grant me some success in gaining the confidence of these poor souls.

"*November 16th.*—Mr. Clarke informed me there was an excellent opportunity for some energetic young man to build up a society in Milwaukee; spoke of the flourishing condition of those new societies which our students are forming. I love to hear this, and am impatient to be in the work. I see by the papers that at the Autumnal Conference in New England, they have noticed the decline or neglect of private family worship, and the want of some sort of a creed. These are just the points upon which I have often spoken, and which I think it to be the duty of every lover of Unitarianism to lend his voice and example to remedy. I think it to be the result of a reaction produced by the restraint imposed by the stern Trinitarianism which required its believers to read a chapter in the book of Chronicles with as much relish and reverence as they would the fourteenth chapter of John.

"*November 27th, Thanksgiving.*—. . Have heard an excellent discourse from J. F. Clarke. . . This evening Mr. W.—— bor-

rowed a violin, and we had dancing, and have had a hearty dinner, fine exercise, and good laughs, for all of which I feel thankful. If I have done any thing wrong, may God forgive me; but I feel that, in dancing, we have really done good to ourselves, and have, we hope, to others. But where will another Thanksgiving find me: how far advanced in virtue, how many faults overcome, how many faculties cultivated. . .

"*December 3d.* . . Found upon visiting the jail that all but two of those I had seen before had left—one boy of thirteen to the house of correction for four years. How mysterious these things are to me—how shall we draw the line that divides voluntary crime from that which is the effect of education.

"*December 4th.* . . . Purchased a small tin tea-pot for eighteen cents, and a quarter of a pound of tea for twenty-five cents. Am now prepared to make a cup of tea; the reason for doing this is that I may keep awake nights. I can accomplish much more, and I really need the time as much as any body can. It is now twenty minutes past eleven, and I am not sleepy at all.

"*December 5th.* . . . I desire to love some being that has been made generously strong by nature. My own nature, having never been turned in the right channel, has feasted upon self as supplying the absence of other objects, and here lies the work of a lifetime, which, had I commenced when a child, might have been spent in building up instead of pulling down. It would be a great privilege to be enabled to love God with all the fervor of which I am capable, to hate sin with the hatred of which I am capable. I would have a dread of insincerity which would always compel me to speak the truth and nothing but the truth. I would have convictions of duty so strong as to give me the zeal which I am capable of showing when self is the great I Am.

"*December 9th.*—. . . I have received my theme from Prof. F——. I certainly desire a clear view of the claims of things and actions in the way of reforms. I would like to know just what position to take, and how to act. I do not wish to live in the very same track which others have trod before me. I wish to have a way of my own first, and then if I learn that my way and

opinions are those of others, be rejoiced, and not change them because others embrace them, thinking thereby to show a great individuality or independence of thought."

"*Thursday*, *December* 11*th*.—Have not performed as much to-day as I ought; it will not really do for me to waste *any* time. It seems as if I must do everything at once. . . . . I want a strong desire for truth; this is the spring of knowledge; it is the philosopher's stone. A man may talk for the sake of talking, read for the sake of being informed, think deeply and patiently for the purpose of being invincible. A man may do each and all of these things, and yet be a narrow-minded man; but put as the corner-stone of all knowledge the love of truth, and the superstructure will be comely in all its parts."

"*December* 14*th*.—Am conscious, I think, of being hones, when I say I am ready to be convinced of the truth wherever it may be found; that my dearest preconceived opinions shall not disturb the independence of my thought."

"*December* 16*th*.—Carlton objected to my sitting up so late at night. I am really sorry for it, but I enjoy it so much, and can really accomplish so much work."

"*December* 21*st*.—Not one aspiration unselfish and pure! Fitting for the ministry without feeling a single joy of which I wish to speak to others. I have never felt what it was to be forgiven."

"*December* 23*d*.—I sit down and quietly think over my prospects for time and eternity. Certainly I am as worthless a person as need be to help make up a world."

These last two entries, read in the light of Carlton's good advice immediately preceding, and the new tea-pot of a fortnight earlier, will be credited to a weary body rather than to a wicked soul. There is something very pathetic in that burst of enthusiasm over his tea-pot and his tea. For the time was short enough ere it was not something to keep him awake that he wanted, but something to put him

to sleep. Little he dreamed as he chuckled over the first-fruits of his tea-making, that there would come a time when

> "Not poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Could medicine him to that sweet sleep
> Which he owed yesterday."

"*December 25th.*—My greatest sin to-day is that I have done little, and have allowed others to think that I know more of music than I really do."

"*December 28th.*—Listened to Mr. —— in the morning on the text, 'The fashion of this world passeth away.' I thought some of it a miserable attempt to make some body cry."

"*January 6th*, 1852.—Bought two apples this evening, the first thing of the kind I have indulged in since I came to Meadville."

"*March 18th.*—The trouble in my head has increased so much, I am obliged to give up study for the present. Mr. —— and I have determined to take a tramp in the woods, to visit the pine forests where the lumbering business is carried on extensively."

The trouble in his head was no doubt bad enough, but there was also at this time a serious trouble in his heart. He had already seen much of Margaret Shippen, and from her and different members of her family had encountered a great deal of healthy opposition to his views, and was to encounter a good deal more. The whole family were far in advance of his own views at the time he made their acquaintance, and probably did more to modify them than any other influence in school or out of it. "Was talking with Mrs. Shippen," he writes, "was much surprised to hear her views of the Old Testament, but it does me good to hear my views spoken against." Margaret's sister mar-

ried his brother Carlton. Another sister, Ellen, followed him, at two years' distance, into the unseen, and it is sweet to think that there they have renewed an intercourse which here was full of mutual help and inspiration. Wonderful flowers grow in her footsteps all through the journals and the letters of her noble friend. A certain question being answered in the affirmative, helped the heart trouble mightily; but the trouble in his head, though not always patent, was never cured until

"God's finger touched him, and he slept."

In December, 1861, he thus recalls, in a letter to a Brooklyn friend, his first impressions of the Shippen *habitat.*

"STAPLEY FURNACE, December 20, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND MILLS: I am here in the midst of a small Switzerland, where a lover of contrasts could satisfy his most eager appetite for beauty. It is in the heart of the Coal and Iron country of North-western Pennsylvania. So rough as to be nearly useless, except for all mining purposes. The Allegheny river worries its way among these mountains, tinged with a sea-green, by the shadow of hemlocks, which are always haunting it through all its windings. I well remember the first time I came here to see *somebody.* You can imagine how these wild glens, and steep hills, and flaring waters played upon the somewhat heated imagination of a young lover. *Her* house stood on the banks of the river, close beside the water, just where a little creek cuts through the bank and enters the river at right angles with the main stream. The house stood on the little point of land at the union of the two streams. It was sunset when I arrived at the top of the hill, behind the house. As I descended into the twilight of the ravine, I heard, four hundred feet below me, the rush of the little creek, the roar of the mill-wheels, and the lowing of cattle. (Ah! it

makes me feel *young* to think of it.) At last I reached the 'cot in the valley I love.' The front porch was embowered in honeysuckles in full bloom, and somebody was standing at the door."

"*Meadville, April* 30*th.*—My head is very bad, and it has been determined that I must give up study. I shall go home."

"*Mendon, June* 14*th.*—Have closed twenty pairs of boots to-day. Head worse than usual."

"*July* 25*th.*—Have only closed twelve pairs of boots to-day. [And no wonder.] Have finished *David Copperfield.*"

"*August* 1*st.*—I am at a loss to know how to control my impulses better. I would not for the world cool the ardor of my temperament, or the determination with which I take hold of what I am doing. Still I want fixedness of purpose to go with this fervency, or that great blessing will become an injury."

"*August* 9*th.*—Feel remarkably free from impulse and excitement, and am in hopes that I shall be successful in controlling myself without cooling the earnestness of my feelings."

"*August* 24*th.*—Arrived in Meadville. This is my twenty-second birth-day. I am blessed beyond measure. Am not so far in advance of what I was a year ago as I could wish, yet nothing would tempt to exchange my *position*, as it is now, for what it was then. I would forget the steps already taken, and press on to new effort and success."

"*September* 30*th.*—Had a nice talk with J. F. Clarke; told him how much good I thought he had done me. He seemed pleased, and said, 'You know in what particular way you have been benefited; now go and do the same for others.'"

"*October* 3*d.*—Dr. Stebbins advised the students to go out and find families where they could read and pray. I do not think so. I feel that the duties which I owe my fellow-men are those which I owe this school, at present."

"*November* 1*st.*—To-day the people of the United States make choice of a president. A solemn day! The bells ought rather to be tolled than rung. Voted for John P. Hale."

"*November* 15*th.*—One of our teachers tried to tell us how

large the universe is—a futile attempt. I obtained the idea that it is a 'whacker.'"

"*December* 10*th.*—This evening had the most glorious sunset I ever saw. I have enjoyed another of those days which no one ever enjoys but a student in perfect health. Butler is the most charming study I have taken hold of. Am reading Plato on the immortality of the soul."

"*December* 25*th.*—In the evening I attended the Episcopal church. About half as much form I should like very much."

"*December* 27*th.*—I am happy and in good spirits that succeed each other day after day, and I must think that my love for Margaret and hers for me are the great turning-points in my character, and that it was essential to my growth. She is the pivot around which my life has turned. During the last year important influences have been at work upon me, silently but surely.

"*January* 6*th*, 1853.—Stopped in at the Methodist church, where they are having a revival. I confess my heart was warmed, and I felt interested. I bid them God speed."

But the next time he did not like so well.

"*January* 8*th.*—Went to the Methodist church, but was not suited at all. It really moved me with indignation to see them weeping and wailing."

"*June* 15*th.*—It was my turn to preach again this afternoon. Succeeded very much to my dissatisfaction. I always feel sick of my productions while delivering them, they seem to fall so powerless and pointless. I feel like throwing them in the fire."

"*June* 24*th.*—Another miserable, sleepless night. This habitual inability to sleep is wearing upon me. Went to the doctor this morning for morphine powders; took two, and managed to sleep two hours."

"*June* 25*th.*—Another sleepless night."

So ended another year, with its sad prophecy of sleepless nights and weary days. On the whole, this year was much

more satisfactory to him than the preceding. The morbid fancies that possessed him at Westfield, and for a long time after, had seen fit to depart. In the teachings of Professor Huidekoper, and still more in his personality, he found much to admire; and by Dr. Stebbins' careful preparation for his duties and conscientious discharge of them, he was continually admonished of his own necessities in these directions. Even while appealing from his teachings, he submitted to the spell of his contagious earnestness. His studies were much more to his taste than formerly; he had given himself to them without stint. His collateral reading in metaphysics, moral philosophy, and history, opened to him new worlds of thought and information. Moreover, he began to smell the battle of preaching afar off, and his sermons were written with great care and wrestlings of the spirit. Having prepared them carefully, he gave equal care to their delivery, studying elocution with great fervor and delight, and laying in hard work the foundations of his subsequent skill as an extempore speaker. His sermons for the most part were deep-rooted in his personal experience. One of the first of them was on amusement, and preached a Gospel on that subject which at that time was very rare, and heterodox in the extreme. It is clear that this sermon grew out of his own love of sport, and the attempt which he made to drive it out with a pitchfork, only to see it coming back as vigorous as ever. At last he began to suspect that "when God made him he meant him." Here is the base of his position.

"The evil which attaches to any institution or course of action is not a sufficient reason in itself for rejecting it. If it is, I can not see where we are to stop until we have cast out alike all human recreation and employment, for none are free from it. Evil is of two kinds, necessary and accidental. The former

arises from the *nature* of a course; the latter from the manner in which it is operated. In one case evil *must* arise, in the other it may. One is *always wrong*, the other may be right. The former one ought to exterminate, the latter one ought to purify; and the great work which the Christian moralist has to do with society is to distinguish the two and point out their evils and dangers, not to denounce all indiscriminately; to correct and reform the one, to overwhelm and destroy the other. Now I think it can be shown that the abuse of amusement is wholly accidental. That it arises not from its nature, but from its bad management."

Another of his Meadville sermons, the third, deals with the subject of Reforms. It is wonderfully prudent, considering how deeply his heart was interested in the reforms of the day, and shows he was at this time no stranger to the art of persuasion. The false conservative and the false radical he describes with admirable precision. He finds that two elements enter into every successful reform—correctness of principle and fitness of time; and applying these last to the anti-slavery reform, decides in favor of its principle, and declares that its time has come. Except here, I do not myself remember to have ever heard that test of temporal fitness applied to a reform to any purpose except that of damning it. Nor even here is sufficient allowance made for the fact that the best way of finding out whether a reform is timely is to see if it will go. The failure will be timely at any rate.

But the best of all his Meadville sermons, alike as the exponent of his power and his position, is a sermon on Reverence. At that early day he made accurate thinking rather than fine writing the mark of his high calling. He realized as clearly as James Russell Lowell that "illustrations should

be windows and not blinds;" and in all his sermons there is not an illustration introduced for its own sake, nor one which does not help to elucidate his subject. His position at this time was not radical, but decidedly progressive. The gist of his sermon on Reverence is contained in the following passage:

"Place before men worthy objects of reverence; strip the church of her bigotry and superstition. Do not attribute to God that which we would not respect in man. Do not claim infallibility for the *letter* of a self-contradictory record. Do not claim perfection for imperfect Christians. This is the only hope of the church. It has no longer the rack and the hangman to guard it. Its work is the only ground upon which it can now claim the respect of mankind."

His first immediate impressions of Theodore Parker were not very flattering, but they reveal the liberal attitude of his mind.

"*July 9th*, 1853.—Was introduced to Dr. Hall, of Providence. On our way to Cambridge was introduced to Theodore Parker. He does not show his greatness in his face—has an unpleasant expression. When he left the omnibus, Dr. Hall said to Mr. Ryder, so loud that all could hear him, 'There! you have seen the elephant.' I do not like the way men feel themselves privileged to speak of Mr. Parker. I respect the man, though I have no sympathy with his peculiar doctrines."

"*July 24th*, *Sunday*.—I felt my weakness and boyishness before I went to church, and during the preliminary services. During my sermon forgot myself more. I felt as if I wanted to nestle close to God, as if he would care for me and do the best thing possible for my growth. I consecrate my powers to him."

"*August 8th*.—Have left my gloves somewhere, and my coat at Nantucket. Must be more careful."

"*August* 16*th*.—Received a letter from Mr. Sturgis, of New-York, [who had befriended him financially,] stating that as soon as he found that his letter had obliged me to go into a relation of personal matters, he closed and returned it at once. *He is a man*."

"*August* 21*st*.—Mr. S—— took my hand and said that was a first-rate sermon. So Mr. H——. I am sure this all seems pleasant enough, but I could improve more when the praise was less unqualified. I hope M—— will always continue to be faithful in expressing his views of my sermons."

"*August* 24*th*.—This is my birth-day again—it is astonishing how they come around; twenty-three years old to-day. If I have any consolation it is in hoping I have laid some deep foundations upon which character may permanently rest. If so, if God is a more real presence to me, if religion is more a part of my thoughts and feeling, if the Christian virtues are the medium through which I look upon and act toward others, then no wonder it can not be seen. These things must be acquired by silent labor in that inner temple where no friends applaud, no world frowns, no other presence is but the Great Eternal. I hardly dare hope that I have accomplished this, but I do trust that some tendency has been given to my thoughts and character in this last year. I have enjoyed much and suffered but little. I have enjoyed a great deal. . . . . I fear I have not been as thankful as I ought for this. The blessing is so great I can hardly grasp it, only at times; I pray I may have a greater appreciation of it, and may associate the enjoyment I receive from it more with the goodness and love of God."

"*September* 4*th*.—Meadville again. I want to see more of the Transcendental Philosophy."

"*September* 28*th*.—This evening Carlton preached the best sermon he ever preached, in the Hall. I do find a *most hateful* feeling of envy or ambition rising in me when I hear a good sermon. I feel determined to beat it at once. I felt this while hearing Carlton's sermon. I do pray that all such feeling may be taken away from my heart."

"*October* 31*st.*—There is no use in trying to superinduce feeling faster than it is disposed to come from real interest."

"*December* 7*th.*—Awoke this morning with the thought of my unfinished lecture. Worked hard throughout the day, and at night had nothing done. This evening resolved to dictate to Margaret, and get her to assist me in clearing up my muddled thoughts. I did so, and felt better at once. The whole subject came out in fresh colors and new interest."

The habit thus begun was never given up. The labor of writing became more painful to him every year, as the wreck of his nervous system increased; and at last became absolute torture. The greater part of his Brooklyn sermons were dictated to his wife; a few to an amanuensis. He would begin them himself, but would very soon grow weary. Some of his letters to Collyer are written with a writing-machine of which he had great hopes. The result is an astonishing resemblance to Collyer's own chirography.

"*December* 23*d.*—Mary C. gave me a nice knife for a Christmas gift. If I had any money of my own I should enjoy giving presents, but I have only two cents."

"*January* 3*d*, 1854.—Dr. S. said an old lady told him that an expression in my sermon at Austinburg was the first word of consolation she had ever received to cheer her in her home duties. It does me an unspeakable amount of good to find there is a reality in preaching, after all."

"*April* 9*th.*—I think he assumed too much of a belligerent attitude in preaching even to sinners. They do not sacrifice their claims to courtesy by being such. I think his tone in prayer is not simple enough, although his spirit is earnest and sincere. I love an entire want of any attempt to be eloquent in prayer."

"*June* 28*th.*—What a day this has been. Full of rich experience and pleasant memories—a day that has made its impress

on my soul. This evening, H. W. Beecher held a large crowd enchained; there is no need of my saying one word about it here, for it is more plainly written upon my heart. He has aroused all the thunder in my soul, and I should like to preach to-morrow upon the strength of the inspiration."

"*June 29th.*—This afternoon our themes were given before a good audience. They averaged well. Mine was well received. Was grieved to hear some persons speak of it as *a fine performance.* Oh! I pray for that spiritual elevation which looks right above every thing else and says, 'Father, thou knowest.'"

"*June 30th.*—When I awoke this morning and thought I no longer had any teachers, and should never again be a pupil, I could have cried over the sense of loneliness and responsibility."

And so the sweet, sad, blessed school-life ended, and the sweeter, sadder, and more blessed ministry began.

III.

LIFE IN LEXINGTON.

After his graduation, Mr. Staples lingered in Meadville a few days that he might be with Carlton on his wedding day, which the whole land celebrated, for it was "the glorious Fourth," and then went East to fulfill engagements he had made to preach in various places. During his last year in the school, his progress had been a delight to himself and an astonishment to all his friends, not more in the quality of his thought than in his power of presenting it. Wherever he went, he was well received; but two places, Watertown and Lexington, soon stood out from all the others as claimants for his ministry. It cost him a sore struggle to decide between them. His journal bears the marks of it at every page. The Watertown people offered him much the larger salary; and as he was not one of those persons to whom money sticks, and was himself aware that he was not, this was no small temptation. But he was afraid of fostering his ambition, and, moreover, his sympathies were always immediately enlisted on the side of the weaker party, which in this case happened to be Lexington, the people there having little hope of getting him after the Watertown society called him. For these reasons, and because there was an atmosphere investing Lexington made up of revolutionary memories, and memories of Theodore Parker, and certain very attractive people, he resolved to go there. The society was that of which Theodore Parker was a birthright member, and in spite of the proverb about a prophet's lack of

honor in his own country, it had invited him to be its minister a dozen years before. The ordination of Mr. Staples was on the 20th September, 1854; but this great event was preceded by one greater.

"*September 4th.*—I have little to write this day; for when I feel the most I say the least. We were married this morning at 7 o'clock."

"*September 20th.*—This morning everybody was delighted to see as fair a day as ever blessed the earth. At nine o'clock, I met the council at the Lexington House. A large number were assembled. After a few questions, and discharging other business, we proceeded to the church, where we listened to services which were complete; Mr. Huntingdon's sermon, the best I ever heard from him; the ordaining prayer by Calvin Lincoln, the very breath of heaven. The charge by Freeman Clarke was just what he always does; he never outdoes himself. The right hand of fellowship by Abbot Smith, of West Cambridge, was good, cordial, and appropriate; the address by Thomas Hill, of Waltham, perfect. . . . . It has been a solemn and impressive, but a very happy day. I have felt nothing new. I had anticipated every feeling in the one conviction, that in God my weakness is strength. I do not shrink from the work before me. I feel equal to it—that I shall answer some purpose here, and in proportion as I live in harmony with God's will, I shall succeed. I trust my all to him."

The work thus pleasantly begun, was prosecuted with the utmost vigor and enthusiasm. The time spent in Lexington was the idyllic period of his life. He always idealized his friends; and the Lexington society, without being idealized, was a very interesting group of people. He loved them passionately, and served them most devotedly. One man, Charles Hudson, stood out from all the rest as his chief friend and counselor. He could have had no wiser and no

better friend. His mind was a storehouse of information and ideas, to which he had continual recourse. He remembered with ever deepening gratitude until his dying day, the sympathy and encouragement which he received from this cultivated and great-hearted man.

While in Lexington, Mr. Staples gave a good deal of thought to organization. One of his first acts was to draw up a creed and covenant. He could bear no dead branches on any tree of his tending, and so was determined to make something out of the church as distinguished from the society. His efforts were appreciated, and rewarded with every outward semblance of success. A great many persons joined the church. His journal is continually recording these little triumphs. The majority of his communicants were young people; in particular, a whole flock of beautiful young girls. The secret of this success was no doubt his personal magnetism. His disciples believed *in him* just as the disciples of old believed in Jesus, and consequently were ready to believe or do almost anything that he wished them to. Besides this, he idealized the communion service, and made it something very different from the cold-blooded, conventional affair it is in the majority of churches.

His journal further indicates that he was a good pastor; that he had a great deal of parochial work to do, and did it faithfully. Sickness and death among his people came home to him as if they were in his own family, and they came home to him very often. All through his journal is the sound of funeral bells. In this respect, Lexington was like a great many New-England towns from which the fresh young life has gone away, leaving a population of which many are old or feeble. These sorrowful experiences exhausted him in a fearful manner. The spontaneous out-

pouring of his sympathy was a greater tax upon his vital energies than any conscious effort in the way of study or writing.

"*October* 10*th*.—A couple came to be married this evening. Have now gone the rounds of my profession—done a little of every thing."

"*October* 14*th*.—It is a blessing to live here. My cup runneth over. May God's pure spirit enter my soul! I want to be faithful to these people."

"*October* 21*st*.—Had a full church meeting this evening. It was satisfactory and encouraging. . . . They adopted a simple creed which I had drawn up."

This was Saturday evening. The next day he preached on "Christianity, the religion of daily life." "That was a real Parker sermon," said one of his people, who was one of Mr. Parker's adherents. The same sermon he entirely rewrote in Milwaukee and again in Brooklyn, and as it was preached in Brooklyn it was one of his best sermons. Many of his sermons ran through his whole ministry. Once certain that he had a living thought he could never be quite satisfied with his expression of it, but wanted to be continually recasting it. And as with the general drift of his sermons, so with particular sentences. His manuscript sermons are so many palimpsests, they are so interlined and re-interlined with corrections. This is much more so with his own writing than with the portions dictated to others. It was with him a good deal as with Coleridge, who, with pen in hand, felt a thousand checks and difficulties in the expression of his meaning, but never the smallest hitch or impediment in the fullest utterance of his abstrusest thoughts and most subtle fancies by word of mouth. He accused himself of difficulty of expression, and accounted for the difficulty

by his lack of early training. But the difficulty was in satisfying his own standard of fineness and accuracy. Had he been as easily satisfied as most men are, he would have found no difficulty. It is interesting to trace the growth in his thought through the changes in his manuscripts. The changes are almost never in the interest of euphony but in the interest of thought—to please his mind and not to please his ear. If he was a little too anxious to surpass others, he was always a great deal more anxious to surpass himself. His sense of power was nothing like complacency. What he had done always seemed little to him in comparison with what he ought and meant to do.

"*December* 14*th*.—Have been pumping for a Christmas sermon, but the well is dry and the boxes loose. It starts hard."

"*December* 14*th*.—Mr. and Mrs. B —— called. Mr. B—— is one piece of good cheer. He has thrown an idea into the well with which I think I can bring up a sermon."

"*December* 15*th*.—Still pumping for a Christmas sermon. Boxes squeak and the water low."

"*February* 18*th*, 1855.—Preached in Boston to-day; in the evening went to hear J. F. Clarke. He preached upon the duty of resisting wicked laws. There was nothing very new or striking in his discourse, but it stirred in us both many strong feelings. There is a restraint which I feel upon these subjects which chafes me badly, and yet somebody must influence my people. I pray for guidance. Margaret sees the whole thing in its true light. She is true blue; and as independent as you please. I wish that I had more of her feeling."

"*February* 20*th*.—Have read Dr. ——'s sermon before the Governor and Council, and was so disgusted with its conservative spirit, I sat down immediately and wrote to Garrison to send me the *Liberator*."

"*March* 3*d*.—Oh the unspeakable joy of having a home of my own!"

"*April 20th.*—If my work was not God's work I should feel discouraged."

"*April 27th.*—Have been with the Clarkes to Brooke farm. The day cold and windy. We strolled about that place of disappointed hopes. A spirit of sadness seemed to linger around the deserted cottages—cellars filled with ruins—fields wanting not in beauty or richness, but needing the culture of a hand that can say, 'they are mine!' All was interesting, though sad. I can not describe the feelings which pressed upon me. I fancied those tired poets returning to their plain homes, and trying to believe it was pleasant."

"*June 17th.*—Preached upon the sphere of the pulpit. Said some *very* plain things, but the people bore it nobly. Think I touched more consciences than ever before."

"*June 23d.*—Have spent a pleasant day taking father and mother around. They seem much delighted with everything. I dread to-morrow; to preach before them is trying in the extreme."

"*June 24th.*—Father seems to have been much pleased with the services."

"*June 26th.*—I never expected to receive my parents in so blessed a home. God has been gracious to me indeed. My life is like a dream. Strange, strange that I should be so blessed!"

"*September 23d.*—Preached my first anniversary sermon to a very full house. Endeavored to tell the people what we ought to do, as well as congratulate them on what we have done. My text: 'Rejoice with fear and trembling.' Am very tired, and feel the need of rest."

"*October 23d.*—Listened to a sermon by Oliver Stearns, which was a burning fire, but a little tinctured with a foggy theology, which desires to throw around the character of Christ a mystery that does not belong to it. If we once admit that the power of Christ—whatever it may be—was delegated, which all but Trinitarians must do, why not suppose power enough to make

him equal to whatever work he had to perform without any miraculous connection of the Father with him?"

"*October 8th.*—Mr. H. tells me there is some uneasiness felt about my last Sunday's sermon. I do not care; should prefer to give satisfaction, but if I can not by preaching the truth as I see it, it must go."

"*December 14th.*—Had a talk with Ellen about this world being an unhappy one."

Of course he did not think it was, for only three days before, his first child, Frederick Augustus, had opened his eyes in the house, and lighted it up with a strange glory. Great was his joy in this new comer, and in the little ones that came after, Fanny and Carrie to just taste the earth and go, and Cora Collyer, to light up for him, with her baby eyes, the dark valley. His home-life was intense. To miss it for a day was dreadful pain to him, to take it up again a joy he celebrated in ways more natural than ministerial. His letters to Fred are as tender as Luther's to his "Johnny," and a great deal more sensible. In his intimate relations with "Heavenly Fahder," he found a source of deep and tender joy. "Well papa," said the rogue one day, when he had come in well soaked with snow-water, "I told Heavenly Fahder that I didn't want so much snow round here, and that I wished he would make it come summer, but he wouldn't." At another time he found him making paper-babies, "for Heavenly Fahder to make angels out of." In no respect was Mr. Staples's constantly increasing nervousness more painful to him, than in its preventing him from always entering into and enjoying his children's pranks. But somehow, they seemed to know that it was not their father, but their father's nerves, that could not stand the awful racket which they sometimes made. They knew they

had no better friend than he. One evening the summer after his death, Fred, then nine years old, was looking at a sunset. He called his mother to come and see how beautiful it was. She, being busily engaged in conversation with her sister, came and said, "Yes, it is beautiful," and continued the conversation. He next called his aunt, who came and looked, and spoke in the same casual way. This was too much. The hot tears came rushing to his eyes, and burying his face in his hands, he cried out, "Oh! I *wish* papa was here to enjoy it with me," so well did he remember that his sympathy was never craved in vain.

"*December* 21*st*.—Rode into the city with Dunbar to hear Thackeray. He is not to be described. Is not profound. Is chatty, ambles along so that you cannot bear to think of his ever stopping. He makes you love him. Does not lecture but talks."

"Mrs. A—— and Mrs. B—— called to talk about joining the church. It is curious to observe the workings of different characters on such occasions. Each will give expression to the highest thought they are capable of. Was never more struck with the difference in spheres than when talking with these two ladies. Mrs. A—— is kind-hearted, and has good feelings, but no higher view of religion than as being the highest and best form of propriety and benevolence. Mrs. B—— has been in the fire of trouble, and has become purified into a knowledge of the spirit, and a desire for the highest spiritual life."

"*February* 13*th*, 1856.—I hope I am on the verge of something better; for certainly this feeling of dissatisfaction is too much."

"*March* 29*th*.—If I dared flinch from preaching it (a sermon on intemperance) I fear I would. But my duty is plain. The truth must be spoken. It is hard to wound the feelings of

friends, but woe is unto me if I preach not the truth. I will leave the consequences to him whose the truth is."

"*May* 10*th.*—[Something having gone wrong in the choir] I sometimes wish I had no ear for music to be pleased or offended. But so it is. I live or die on a sweet sound or harsh.

Mr. Staples's love of music began with his earliest years, and grew with his growth more discriminating, and more passionate every year. This love came from his father, as also did his first lessons. When his father was away from home winter evenings, the boy would go out into the moonlight, and wait, and wait, until he heard the first creaking of his sledge as it reached a neighboring hill-top, and then the sweet tones of his voice, singing some one of the simple songs of which he had a store. When he was weary there was nothing that rested him so much; when he was nervous and distracted, nothing could so soothe and quiet him. There could be no surer proof of his dependence on it, and its power over him, than that on the night of his little Carrie's burial, he went to a concert, and sat there more solitary in his grief than if he had been the only person present, converting the sweet sounds into encouragement and resignation. At an early age he learned to play upon the flute and violin, and still later upon the piano. His journals abound with musical experiences, criticisms favorable and unfavorable on operas and oratorios, and great performers.

On the twenty-first of May, this year, came the news of Mr. Sumner's attempted murder by Preston Brooks. Mr. Staples was very active in getting up an indignation meeting, one of the many that in that day of terrors were held throughout the North. He was delighted with the tokens of awakening conscience that the meeting evinced in the Lexington community, and for a time grew more hopeful

as to his work. He had not been very hopeful during the Spring. He had been feeling a good deal discouraged, and consequently restless and uneasy. It was not from any lack of outward success, nor from the failure of his plans. The society had grown rapidly under his care; the people were united upon him, with the exception of a few persons to whom his anti-slavery sermons were an abomination, and who occasionally slammed their pew-doors behind them and walked out of church; though even these found it hard work to get along without his preaching, and soon got hungry and came back. The church proper had also increased rapidly. But it was evident to Mr. Staples, that his people liked him better than his views. Personally they were very fond of him, and could not do enough for him and his wife. But when it came to his progressive views of doctrine, and worship, and church-work, they did not sympathize with him and offer him their aid. This state of things was most distasteful to him. The righteous indignation aroused by the assault on Mr. Sumner and the Kansas outrages encouraged him for a time; but the trouble was too deep to be thus easily allayed. He was not himself conscious, at first, of its main source, which afterward he found to be the great progress he had made in thought since leaving Meadville, and the instinctive feeling that a new field was best adapted to his new ideas and designs. His radicalism, which had been increasing steadily, did not fairly come to consciousness in him until his Lexington ministry was a dream of the past.

"*July 27th.*—Mr. Crufts came up to preach for me on an exchange that I had entirely forgotten. I found him in my pulpit when I went there. It is too bad, and I reproach myself severely for it."

About this time Mr. Staples made an arrangement with Mr. Mumford, then at Detroit, which enabled him to go West and preach for several Sundays. He left Lexington on the 31st of July. On Sunday, August 17th, he preached for the first time in Milwaukee, to an audience of about two hundred persons. The following Sunday he preached there again. Measures were immediately taken to secure his services, but he gave the people no encouragement, though he was deeply drawn to them. August 31st finds him again in his own pulpit, and glad enough to see his own beloved people.

"*September 15th.*—Have received a letter from the Milwaukee society, asking me to become their minister. It is a beautiful letter. It is hard to bring my mind to contemplate it."

"*September 17th.*—The call from Milwaukee keeps floating before my mind like the memory of a dream. I somehow feel, without knowing why, that I shall go."

"*September 20th.*—The Milwaukee phantom haunts me still. I grow thin thinking of it. What will become of me when I come to decide?"

"*October 23d.*—This Milwaukee matter makes us all sick at heart. I have concluded to resign next Sunday."

"*October 25th.*—It seems as if I cannot resign."

"*Sunday, October 27th.*—The day is fine; the air soft and genial; the streets so dry, it does not seem so late in the year. Resigned this afternoon. It was awfully solemn. I could hardly endure it. God bless my people and strengthen me."

The last days at Lexington were painful in the extreme. A month before his departure his journal breaks off in the middle of a sentence, and thereafter testifies by its silence what bitter thoughts were passing in his mind, how full of tears was his great heart. Never had the people seemed so kind, so lovable. Had not the most influential of them

agreed with him that it was his duty to go, it would have been even harder than it was to part with them. His throat, too, came to the assistance of his judgment, with an intimation that the East was no place for it. Thus, before leaving Lexington, he had seen the beginning of the end. The troubles in his head and throat were both well under way, and afterward were to alternate in persistent inroads on his health and vigor.

His two years at Lexington were rich in culture and experience. There he decided the great question between love and duty, as presented to him by the political and social problems of the time. It is very easy for some men to say all they think on these problems, because they are men of little feeling, who take a profound enjoyment in stamping upon other people's toes. Mr. Staples was not of this sort. He was himself very sensitive, and took for granted that others were pretty much the same. The question with him was not, as with many, between duty and popularity. It was between duty and love. He hated to wound any one. He deserves then the greater praise that at the risk of wounding his best friends he did his duty. There was never any more hesitation about that. In Milwaukee and in Brooklyn he declared unto his people "the whole counsel of God" without a moment's wavering, though oftentimes it hurt him more to do it than it hurt those who kicked against the pricks most furiously.

Of the progress he had made in his theology, Mr. Staples was not himself aware till he looked back from the vantage-ground of a new position. But even more than in theology, in ecclesiastical matters he had deeply changed. At Meadville, it will be remembered, he went to the Episcopal church, and thought that about half as much form he

should like very much. At Lexington, church methods had for him at first no little fascination, and it was no lack of outward success with them that suggested their poverty. It was their lack of harmony with the rational and secular spirit of the age, of which he had become a quiet and sincere disciple. In his theology, Mr. Staples grew more radical until his death. But in leaving Lexington he left all his ecclesiasticism behind him, all his formalism. After that he might stand a few times more at the communion-table, but it would be as a man, not as a priest; he might baptize little children, but it would be in a purely personal and original, not in any ecclesiastical or sacramental way. Henceforth society is to be his universal church; all its great moral forces its ministers, and he a fellow-laborer with these in regenerating individual and social life. Some one who knew him well has said of him, "He did not *grow* into radicalism; he *stepped into it all at once* on going West." But I take it that this only means that he stepped all at once into clear consciousness of what had taken place in his convictions. The path was difficult, and he walked with his head down to find it, not knowing that he was ascending, even by the weariness. And now it was as if he had suddenly emerged from the clouds, and, on the summit, heaven with all its stars lay over him.

"With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done;
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern."

IV.

MILWAUKEE AND THE ARMY.

The Western campaign began in December, 1856. The records of it are far less complete than those of his previous and subsequent life; or, perhaps I should say, they are more sacred and less reportable, being contained for the most part in daily letters to his wife, who was away from him in Meadville, St. Louis and Stapley Furnace, in the aggregate, a good deal. There is no journal to speak of until January, 1860, three years after the beginning of his new ministry, and this continues only four or five months, and is more a record of his outward than of his inner life. In 1859 began his friendship and correspondence with Robert Collyer, a friendship he deeply prized, a correspondence that was to both a source of boundless culture and delight. Their first meeting was in Chicago, where Mr. Collyer was then minister at large. Mr. Staples went in company with Mr. Brigham to hear Mr. Collyer preach, and when the service was over went up with both hands extended to thank him for preaching so well. The extended hands were met and clasped, and held ever tighter and tighter, until death came and severed them. Never did a young girl with her first lover wait for his letters more impatiently than Mr. Staples waited for his friend's. That one of them should arrive just in time to lie in the office over Sunday was the one piece of Sabbatarianism with which he

had no patience whatever. The letters once begun grow more and more frequent. In Brooklyn Mr. Staples wrote regularly every week. But this was far from being a sufficient outlet for sympathy and affection, and sometimes letter follows letter day after day. On both sides the correspondence was characterized by an admirable frankness and sincerity. If there is mutual praise, there is also mutual criticism. Each loves the other so devotedly that he hates his faults. The motto of their friendship might have been in Thoreau's words:

> "Let such pure hate still underprop
> Our love, that we may be
> Each other's conscience,
> And have our sympathy
> Mainly from thence.
>
> "We'll one another treat like gods,
> And all the faith we have
> In virtue and in truth, bestow
> On either, and suspicion leave
> To gods below."

But this friendship and correspondence were not in full bloom until after Mr. Staples left Milwaukee and went into the army, where, meeting Collyer in Washington, their conversation was in heaven, and the sturdy shoot struck down its roots and up its branches, and became a tree whose grateful shade afforded them full many an hour of shelter from the glare and heat of this almost too busy work-day world.

The enthusiasm and earnestness that attended the forming of the Milwaukee society will always be remembered by the few most earnest souls that were at the time Mr. Staples's constant counselors and coadjutors. Mr. Staples

himself was full of hope and expectation. Perhaps he was more hopeful, or at any rate more expectant, than he had any right to be. In all the practical affairs of life he was a profound idealist. He idealized the situation in Milwaukee to an extent that could but pave the way for disappointment sooner or later. Had his people been as perfect as he imagined them, there would have been no need of his preaching or of any other. He went there in a time of unexampled commercial prosperity, a time when even the poor felt rich, because they were making money rapidly. During the first winter he preached in a public hall, that was dedicated during the week to itinerant phrenologists and geologists, theatrical performances, prestidigitation, and so on. This would have troubled him sorely a few years before, but now that he had come to apprehend religion, not as a part of life, even the best part, but as the divine outlook, accent, inspiration of the whole, it made but little difference. He thought that he ought to be able to counteract the distracting influences of the foot-lights, and the diagrams, and sleight-of-hand-man's marvelous appointments, by which he was surrounded. And truly there was little thought concerning these when he had once risen and begun to speak. There was a something in this hall-preaching that he never found in the new church in Milwaukee, or in the little chapel in Brooklyn. It was the heavenly gift of an unqualified democracy. He knew that in every community some of the best men are as afraid of churches as witches are afraid of water. And though he had no special longing to preach the gospel to such men, seeing that they already had it, he felt that he must have their fellowship and coöperation, and that the church which could not have this was condemned already. Could he have been spared

a year longer in Brooklyn, his wish would doubtless have been gratified, for New Chapel was about as full as it could hold when he was taken.

At the end of the first winter a church building was completed, and the congregation, that had been steadily increasing from the beginning, went into it. Within a few months of its dedication it was filled to overflowing, and after a time it was lengthened out by inserting a large piece in the middle. But the church edifice at its longest, was not the measure of his activity and influence. He became more and more a power in the city and throughout the state; was continually being called upon to speak on public occasions. The common people heard him gladly. He attracted little children to him, and young men and women, as a strong magnet attracts bits of steel. The lake captains, the foundry mechanics, the men of brawn, whose hands were callous with their daily toil, found his hand always ready for a clasp, or lift, or silent charity. It was in these early days that Stephen Camp, now my good fellow-worker in the city of Brooklyn, then a machinist in Milwaukee, first heard him preach. "He startled me," says Mr. Camp, "as with a new revelation. I said to myself, 'Why, this is what I have been wanting to hear all my life long, and I have never heard it until now!'" One day the machine-shop was exchanged for the quiet opportunities of Meadville, whither the love of Mr. Staples followed him, and with its timely praise and honest criticism did him a service for which he has not proved ungrateful.

The same spirit which drove Robertson of Brighton out into the streets at night to seek and save those who were lost, was so strong in Mr. Staples, that men and women who had gone down into the depths, and yet longed to rise

out of them into a purer and a better life, were drawn to him instinctively; they felt certain of his sympathy, certain that his faith in them would be deep enough to call upon their deep of character to some purpose. People who had met with great losses and disappointments, with dreadful hurts in life's promiscuous *mêlée*, gravitated to him with the unfaltering assurance of a natural law. He gave them various help; money, if they needed it; advice, if they asked for it; but at all times love. It was his deep conviction that he had not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and his conviction was for ever flowering into acts of helpfulness.

He gave much attention to the Sunday-school, and for a long while took up more than half the time with general lessons which he prepared with great care. These contained food for all, teachers as well as scholars. He always had great faith in the possibilities of Sunday-schools, and it was a sore trial to him that in Brooklyn his health would not allow him to do what he desired in this direction.

His sermons at this time took a wide range, busying themselves much with the social and political topics of the day, but especially with the one then all-engrossing theme of slavery. The years spent at Milwaukee were the most dreadful of that dreadful time, when the South was violent and aggressive, the North vacillating and timid, when "judicial blindness" of a most dangerous sort afflicted the chief-justice, and James Buchanan was the tool of a pro-slavery cabinet. The following letter to Collyer indicates very fairly Mr. Staples's attitude. The question up is whether Mr. Codding, who, after witnessing a good confession, died in June, 1866, shall be employed as missionary by the Western Unitarian Conference.

"DEAR COLLYER: I have been away from home, or else

might have answered you sooner. I can give you my sober second thought about Codding in a hurry, *pro* and *con*.

"1*st con*. The funds raised are contributed by all shades of politics. Codding is chiefly known as an Abolitionist.

"2*d con*. If he is sent as a missionary to represent Unitarianism, he will necessarily give the impression that our doctrine embraces anti-slavery as one of its cardinal points.

"3*rd con*. The spread of our theology will thus be embarrassed by a new and extraneous condition, and it meets with opposition enough on its own account.

"4*th con*. That he is more anti-slavery than Unitarian. So much for the *cons*. The *pros* are:

"1*st*. The anti-slavery question is the touch-stone of moral soundness in this age. It is the kingdom of heaven presented fairly and squarely to us. Better a thousand times believe in Trinity, total depravity, etc., etc., than believe in human slavery, yea, than not positively hate and oppose it.

"2*d*. The spread of our theology *ought to be* limited to the spread of such views. It has no alliance with any other elements."

Other *pros* follow, but these two are sufficient. The same letter reports a very tempting call to Barton Square, Salem, Massachusetts, which was heroically declined, though at the time Mr. Staples's situation in Milwaukee was no longer pleasant, but on the contrary exceedingly painful and hard. Urgent calls to West-Roxbury, Theodore Parker's first society, and to Worcester, Massachusetts, had already been declined. There were various reasons for this change that in two short years had come "o'er the spirit of his dream." The brilliant period of commercial prosperity that was at its height when the Milwaukee movement began, had been succeeded by a period of great depression. More than thirty families belonging to the congregation had, from this cause, been scattered in a single year. Others were alienat-

ed by the breadth of his theology and his freedom in avowing what he felt to be the truth. But the main cause of the change was undoubtedly that which operated in so many churches of the period, as a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense: his outspoken and determined opposition to the encroachments of the slave power. This opposition culminated in a Thanksgiving sermon preached on the 24th of November, 1859. It was an earnest, brilliant, and exhaustive discussion of the subject. Its title was that happy phrase suggested by William H. Seward, of blessed *memory*, "The Irrepressible Conflict." It attracted a good deal of attention, and was used repeatedly as a lecture during the winter of 1859–60, in different parts of the West. Soon after it was first spoken it was printed; but between the speaking and the printing John Brown had made "the gallows in our politics what the cross is in our religion, the sign and symbol of supreme self-devotedness," and in the printed copy the following note is inserted:

"Since the above was written, John Brown has been hung. He must have known from the first that, in case his plan failed, the gallows was his certain doom. He had violated the laws of Virginia, and he must pay the penalty. He has paid it, and few will complain of that. It is the unenviable privilege of the men of to-day to pick out defects in John Brown's *plan*, and call it insane, and allow these defects to obscure every other feature. But posterity will soon forget all that, as it has done a thousand times before. His unselfish devotion to *abstract right;* his readiness to die for a great principle—*this* is what poets will sing of and history remember."

About this time the journal is taken up again and carried on for about six months.

"*January 2d*, 1860.—Our church enters now on the fourth year

of its existence. It is not so prosperous as it has been. The position I have taken on the slavery question is making much disturbance. But it has been forced upon my conscience."

"*January* 21*st*.—Read Newman on The Soul this morning. It seems to reach a deeper place within me than was ever before touched by a book."

From a letter to Collyer:

"*January* 30*th*.—I feel precisely as you do the perpetual pressure of a more liberal *spirit* against my motives of policy. But the choice can not remain with me much longer. Either I must purify my heart and trust myself to its promptings wherever they may goad me, or lose these swellings of inspiration entirely. Their wings are too delicate to chafe long against such constraining bars without being destroyed thereby. 'Father, glorify thy truth!' that is my motto. It needs great self-prostration to be guided safely by the spirit, but I believe in it *fully*. What do you think of Conway's Dial? His *fatalism* disgusts me. A fearless, powerful mind like his needs a better anchor than that."

Six months after the Milwaukee life began, came Fanny Shippen, May 30th, 1857, to fill a large place in his heart. Between him and this little daughter there was a peculiarly tender tie. He would sit for hours, with her upon his knee, writing his sermons, filling them with the child-like faith of which she furnished him a constant image. But before she was two years old, she died, not having received the promise that her sweet life gave from the beginning. It was a great disappointment to her father, and though he bore it manfully, from that time his wife began to feel that many years were not in store for him. Her death seemed to develop the sadness inherent in his nature, inherent in all natures that have his capacity for joy. In November, 1859, came

Carrie Eddowes, and her stay was even shorter than her little sister's. She died March 5th, 1860.

"*March 6th.*—To-day I have a feeling of perfect trust. All is well. The good God can not, will not err. He loves us, and our little ones are dear to him. The Father is sufficient for us. In him is all that we need. Jesus is no more than one who has borne his griefs in full faith that God loved him even through those very sorrows. We must do likewise."

To his wife:

"*March 28th.*—I thought often of dear little Fanny on the anniversary of her death. Oh that golden spirit! Is she weaving our love into her soul as it grows up to angelic womanhood? What a large part of her father's life she carried with her! It can not be our little cherubs will forget us, since all the beginning they had to grow from was in us. Their memory is very sweet, and seems to sanctify our lives. We have done something worth all our sorrow in giving the darlings existence.

"Last Sunday I had the most singular experience that I have ever had. The day was cold and gray, and the clouds seemed full of despair, and so was my soul. Never did I feel any thing so like remorse. I lost all hope and courage. This lasted until five o'clock. In revolving in my mind what I could do, there flashed upon me a resolution to turn all this energy, even of despair, into the discharge of duty, and instantly came relief. All was bright in a moment, and such exceeding peace I never felt before. It was almost palpable."

To his wife:

"I have always felt that we make too much of death. It can not work any great change in us nor in those we love. We and they must be the same after death as before, so that children dead are ours still, as much as those that are living."

During his last year in Milwaukee, Mr. Staples suf-

fered a great deal from ill-health. The trouble in his throat which had made his leaving Lexington a little easier, came back, and the trouble in his head which he had had in Meadville, but from which he was comparatively free in Lexington, now caused him many sleepless nights and days of terrible prostration. Yet, at this very time, he often boasts about his health, and speaks about his "splendid muscle," being apparently unable to distinguish between nervous and real strength. His weight assisted the illusion, being at this time one hundred and eighty pounds. A year later, in Brooklyn, this had already changed, and in Milwaukee could not have indicated health. But from first to last, Mr. Staples suffered from ill-health to an extent that would make nine men out of ten vote themselves invalids at once. He whistled loud to keep his courage up. He would not allow to himself that he was a sick man. He hoped against hope, till to hope any longer was impossible; and this he did because he felt he had a work to do, and longed to do it; but even more than for this reason—for he felt certain that he should not stop working at the parting of the worlds—he cultivated hope and cheer for the sake of his friends. He was so certain of their love that he knew they could not bear to part with him, and he did not want them to anticipate his death a day sooner than he could help. At the very last, when Collyer and his brother Carlton were coming to see him, and he knew how they would be shocked at his appearance, his heart fairly ached for them. In his journals he is much more apt to speak of his good health than of his bad. But some things would not be left out, and to me the greatest wonder of his life is that his sermons were always healthy, whatever his condition, that he wrote his words of deepest and most central calm when

every nerve was on the rack. His favorite anodynes were books, read to him by the voices of friends. If left to himself, his restless brain refused to let him sleep. His mind always seemed quickened by physical prostration; perhaps the best sermon he ever wrote was written from his dictation, when he was too weak to sit up; but by such abnormal activity, of course, the weakness was continually increased. A book read by another would take him out of himself and into the land of dreams, when, so that the silence might not waken him, the reading still went on.

The winter of 1860–61 was not propitious to the health of a man thus constituted. Lincoln had been elected, but a Union-saving spasm shook the North, and the Crittenden compromise was put to its pale lips as the only means by which recovery could be effected. With Mr. Staples the troubles of his country were his own, and he was hardly less a martyr in her cause than if he had died in the field, so wearing on him was his anxiety in her behalf. He set his face as a flint against every form of compromise, and great was his joy when the 4th of March arrived and found the North still uncommitted to any questionable line of policy.

'DEAR COLLYER: Let us thank the dear God that our President is in the White House, and has been spared to give his grand inaugural.

"I thank you for your juicy note. It was the first I ever received that carried on the face of it such pure and discriminating appreciation; not praise, not flattery. For years and years I have labored on, feeling a divine life burning brightly at my heart, and conscious of seeing large nuggets of truth, but as no one ever acknowledged any worth or pertinence in what I said, or aspired to, I thought myself mistaken.

"Your approval of what I said was, and still is, a great sur-

prise to me. I felt all the while I was preaching that perhaps I was provoking your antagonism; but your repeated assurances, and my absolute faith in you, leave me no room to doubt that my thought is congenial to your own, and there are few things in the world which could afford me so much solid pleasure. And yet a dozen pages of bitter opposition would not humble me so much as your genial approbation.

"I do not wonder at your brotherly hint. I was crazy at Fond du Lac, as indeed I always am when I see you—as different from the staid man who is now writing as you can imagine. I am perfectly conscious of the danger of which you speak. It is a wild rollicking of untamed nature, which now and then will out. You have no idea how irrepressible it is. But it is no part of my better self, and does not in the least enter into what I *am*. Still it is not the less wrong for that. You mistake, however, to think that it is growing on me. It is certainly dying. It used to be a perfect deviltry in me, and for many years I have fought it bravely. But now and then murder will out."

Those who knew Mr. Staples well will know at once what he refers to in the latter part of this letter, his tumultuous spirit of fun, his keen sense of the ridiculous at all times and in all places, his skill in describing and imitating with voice, look and manner, the laughable peculiarities of other people. Doubtless, some people thought that these things argued lack of spirituality. On the contrary, they were probably the sign of it. At any rate, in many notable cases like things have been concomitant with the largest spirituality. It was so in Parker's case and in Luther's, and with Saint Philip Neri. As there was no malice in Parker's fun, which by the hour convulsed his Sunday evening visitors, so was there not in Mr. Staples's. But it was doubtless true of him that he did not have it under very good control, and that at times it ran away with him.

The first part of this letter points at the real trouble—real to him at any rate—which he felt in Milwaukee. It was that he found there no general appreciation of what he knew was his best thought and life. That "no one had ever acknowledged any worth or pertinence in what he said or aspired to" was true of neither Lexington nor Milwaukee, though for the moment it seemed so in comparison with Collyer's perfect sympathy and appreciation. There were a few who took him at his best, asked him for his best. There were many who admired him personally. But there were also many who admired in him what he knew was not his best and deepest side, and their admiration was a constant premium on his unfaithfulness to his clearest light and brightest vision. The recognition which he wanted was recognition of what he knew was his real worth as such, not any superficial admiration. Furthermore, there were little annoyances connected with the practical management of the society on which his nature fretted as a brook against a stone, yet made no music that he then could hear. Such, with others that I have already named, were his reasons for leaving Milwaukee. Yet his final resolve to do so was taken suddenly, and was abruptly broken to his people. In June, he preached in Brooklyn, but hardly as a candidate for settlement. In July, a commission was offered him as chaplain in the Sixth Regiment, Wisconsin Volunteers, which, after a long and careful consideration, he accepted on the 10th of the month, at the same time resigning his position as minister of the Milwaukee society. The pain it cost him to do this is evinced by the silence of his journal, which was now again taken up. There is not one word about it beyond the simple statement of the fact. The whole matter was unspeakably painful to him. He felt as if his whole ministry

had gone for nothing, a feeling from which his brother, who succeeded him, eloquently appealed in a sermon preached to the Milwaukee people the Sunday after Nahor's death. I can not do better than to sum up the results of his Milwaukee life in the words of that sermon.

"Yet in no sense can his ministry here be regarded as a failure, though I have sometimes thought this was the view he then took of it. On the contrary, it was a marked success. During those two years the society lost a class of people who are never of much value except as they help to fill up the pews. It lost those who are never willing a minister should utter what he believes to be true and right when it crosses their political prejudices or selfish interests, who will support him as long as he preaches what does not relate to their sins, but will condemn and shun him if he applies the truths of the Gospel to their conduct. The society lost those who go to a church because it is on the wave of popularity, and it will advance their interests in business to be seen there, or who go to hear some new and startling thing said—all this class, never to be relied on in the hour of trial, always found wanting when their help is needed most, deserted it. These people, and those who had more regard for the minister than for the cause he represented, have very little value in the permanent growth of a church, and their loss to us is not to be taken into account in considering this matter of success.

"But if that discipline which draws out all the latent powers of mind and spirit; if a wide and lasting influence, won by the force of his talents and his devotion to his work; if the awakening of high and generous purposes in others, the strengthening of their souls in trouble, doubt and fear, and the upbuilding of their faith in a God of infinite mercy and tenderness, and a life of endless progress beyond the grave; if the firm planting of a liberal church in a community deeply prejudiced against its doctrines, and the winning for those doctrines a wide and respectful hearing in the State by the eloquence with which he pre-

sented them, and the ardor with which he labored for them; if a work done for the poor, the erring, the forsaken in this city, which will cause his name to be long remembered with gratitude and affection; if these be the evidences of true success, then he won it fully in his ministry here.

"And so it appeared to him at last. In the closing days, when he sat in the shadow of the great change that was coming —or rather, when the light of the opening day shone backward soft and beautiful on all his course—he saw his trials, his disappointments, his sorrows, transfused with the glory of infinite wisdom and love, and felt that all had been well—that all was needed to chasten and purify his hopes. 'I was led in the right way,' he said, 'disciplined for a higher life, and a larger and better influence. That church offers a great and promising field of usefulness. In it I made my best attainments, and did my best work. They are a generous and appreciative people.' The hard and bitter things of his experience here had been touched, softened and glorified, by his faith that God was ever working in him and through him; his disappointments had been swallowed up in the triumphs to which they led the way. Your expressions of love and respect alone lingered in his memory, to brighten and cheer the closing hours. His last thoughts of you were of great tenderness; of the trials and joys which he had shared with you, the holy ties which bound you to him and him to you, and which the approach of death only strengthened, and made him feel would survive all change, and live eternally in the purer air of heaven."

At the beginning of his army journal, Mr. Staples states his reasons for going to the war in the capacity of chaplain. They are:

"I. The hope of doing something to sanctify this cause in the hearts of the soldiers and the community from which they go, and make them if possible worthy of so great a mission.

"II. Because every interest of church and state is concentrated in the success of our cause, and this fact should be impressed upon soldiers and people.

"III. Because some one of position and influence should go with such a body of men, whose special duty it is to keep himself and others human in the midst of war's savage necessities.

"IV. That by associating with the common soldier and gaining his confidence, I may do something to convince him of the deep reality of the spirit and her wants.

"V. That I may be of service to the soldier's friends at home; a mediator between his new life and the old.

"VI. That I may *speak* words of courage and hope to these eleven hundred men, keeping ever before them, as far as I can, the fact that God is very near them always. I put the speaking last, because I think it belongs there.

"VII. Although I shall make no attempt to proselyte, the hope that our faith, so dear to me, may be honored through my fidelity has had something to do toward strengthening my purpose to enlist."

In this straightforward, simple manner did he accept his task, and in like manner did he bear himself while it continued. But his chaplaincy fell upon an evil place and time. His regiment was posted near Washington, when McClellan was just entering on his career of masterly inactivity. We had had rashness, and now caution was to take its place. How long Mr. Staples would have fretted under that costly and terrible experiment we do not know; for his health soon began to grow worse very rapidly, and he applied for and obtained his discharge. He went back to Milwaukee unable to speak above a whisper. But the voice then so feeble was to rally once more for a brief space, and then for ever cease, save as its echoes would for some time longer haunt full many a loving heart.

The one great good that came from Mr. Staples's army life was the reënforcement of the friendship between him and Collyer by many days and nights of sweetest interchange of thought and aspiration.

V.

BROOKLYN.

In July, 1861, while he was at Washington, Mr. Staples received a call from the Second Unitarian society in Brooklyn. The society had been without a pastor for some time, and was not in a flourishing condition. Mr. Longfellow's ministry of seven years had been very successful, but its success was of the sort that must be measured by the plumb-line, not by the surface-level. He had gathered about him a little band of faithful souls, and had nurtured in them a spiritual life that would be to his successors an unfailing source of quiet inspiration. But the same stumbling-blocks that Mr. Staples had encountered in Milwaukee, Mr. Longfellow had encountered in Brooklyn. His pronounced radicalism in theology and politics hindered the lateral growth of the society, but made it strike down its roots the more deeply. Never did any preacher, coming into a new position, find a better nucleus awaiting him than Mr. Staples found in Brooklyn. He accepted the call of the society on condition that he should not enter upon his duties until he had taken a deeper draught of army life.

In the month of August, an effort was made by outside parties, who were not perhaps aware how far the matter between Mr. Staples and the society had gone, to effect the settlement of Rev. W. H. Channing, who was at that time in this country. Somehow it got to the ears of Mr. Staples, who wrote at once to Mr. Mills, as follows:

"My Dear Friend:—I can easily see how your interest in me may have sadly embarassed you in regard to securing Mr. Channing. It was an opportunity of which you knew nothing when you called me, and therefore I *beg* of you to consider my call as *no call* until you have heard that great and good man. If you can get Mr. C., don't fail to do so. He is a ripe man, and I a growing boy; and I would gladly and joyfully withdraw that such an one might be your guide and teacher."

But Mr. Channing's preaching, though most excellent, did not produce a change of heart, and in September we find Mr. Staples arranging for a speedy settlement.

From a letter to Mr. Mills:

"*September 19th*, 1861.—*Don't* expect too much of me. If we come together as pastor and people, let it be for better and for worse. My hope is in the *Spirit*, a hope that if I am very sincere and single and pure-hearted, God will show me wonderful things out of his love, which will feed my people, and beautify their lives. As to the installation, we shall have, I presume, no differences of opinion. Write and tell me the circumstances of Longfellow's installation, and what gave rise to the controversy about it. Perhaps a principle was at stake; if so, let us keep what was then won."

Mr. Frothingham preached the installation sermon, and one of the brethren confuted it in the installation prayer. But on the whole, the occasion was pleasant, though far less significant to Mr. Staples than he had found the like at Lexington. At Milwaukee he had refused to be installed, and only consented in Brooklyn out of good nature. The right hand of fellowship by Dr. Farley is dwelt on in his journal and in a letter to Collyer as the most tender and satisfactory word that managed to get spoken.

"*Sunday, November 10th.*—Preached my first sermon as pas-

tor. It was from the text, 'Stand in awe and sin not; commune with your own heart and be still.' After the sermon I said substantially, 'My friends: my parishioners: It is the custom of pastors on the occasion of their first sermon in a place to state what they intend to do, and mark out for themselves and their people a programme of action for the future. I have none such. It would be hard for me to name any special thing, the success or failure of which I shall deem an indication of our success or failure as a church. I have but one plan, and that is to do the best I can under all circumstances, and if through the success or the failure of many little plans I can help you to live true manly and womanly lives, cheered and strengthened by this still strong religion of the heart, I shall succeed in all I undertake.'

Thus on the very threshold of his Brooklyn ministry did Mr. Staples grasp with prophetic insight the clew to all his future action. He began right. He had come to himself, and said, "I will arise and go to my Father," and he found that Father waiting for him on every hand, seeing him while he was yet a great way off, and running to meet him in the persons of grown men and women, young men and maidens, and little children who fell upon his neck and kissed him on the slightest provocation. Heretofore his preaching had been objective; he had sought for this or that object in the community to preach at or preach for. Now it was to be subjective. He was to seek for truth in his own soul, seek to *express himself*, trusting that good would come of it. This method of preaching from the centre instead of from the circumference was the one great characteristic of Mr. Staples's life in Brooklyn, and the adoption of it was the main secret of his great success.

For his success was great. It began with his first sermon; it increased steadily to the end of the two years

that contained his active ministry, and this, too, notwithstanding the fact that his failing health prevented him from doing his legitimate social work, or at any rate from doing it in his best manner. His preaching was a surprise to himself. New fountains seemed to open in his mind, fountains that were so refreshing to him that he felt they must be to others, and so held their waters to the lips of others with a noble confidence that seldom was mistaken in its object. Every thing was now favorable to his growth. The great book-stores and libraries of New-York City spread out before him their continual feast, and though he fell to vigorously his appetite was always seconded by his digestion. There are men who take up the contents of books as a sponge takes up the contents of a basin, and give them out again in like manner, perhaps a little soiled by contact with the orifices of their minds. There are others who read mainly for the sake of saying that they have read, and a long catalogue of authors' names is about all that stays by them. Mr. Staples, it is needless to say, belonged to neither of these classes. His reading was a perpetual search for truth and beauty; a continual comparison of the results of other thinkers with his own. He took books into his mind as a healthy man takes food into his stomach, to assimilate all that was worth assimilating and to throw the rest away. He had little patience with men whose opinions were always those of the last book they had read. He was singularly independent in his judgments of authors, new and old; no vassal of great names; making original approaches and first hand acquaintances at all times. During his Brooklyn ministry his favorite philosophers were Fichte and Herbert Spencer, a fact conclusive in itself of his intellectual catholicity.

Another opportunity that the new life offered him was the opportunity to hear fine music. He made the most of it, and every little while his journal blossoms into admiration and gratitude. But to this world he was no stranger; not so with the world of art, and great was his delight at being ushered into it, though at first he was a little dazzled, and occasionally mistook tinsel for silver and brass for gold. But here also he soon found his feet and kept them firmly; rapidly acquiring, as in every thing else, strong individual tastes, and daring to express his thought whether it went against or with the fashion.

FROM HIS JOURNAL.

"*November 17th.*—Preached from the text, 'The wisdom which cometh from above is *first* pure, then peaceable.' I made strong allusions to slavery, which gave offense to some. It is hard to see this same effect still produced whenever the subject of slavery is mentioned in the pulpit. Alienation and difference and discord are the immediate results. And yet it can not be that God would have us purchase peace by paying the price of silence upon such a sin as slavery."

"*November 27th.*—I am satisfied that I am finding out the great power of love in preaching and writing over merely cold criticism or argument. It wins where the other repels."

"*November 29th.*—Christened a baby for Mr. Robert Frothingham. It was a beautiful occasion. The grandmother and grandfather were present, and a very large number of aunts and uncles and cousins to the little one. There was music and dancing and plenty of flowers, and the sweet, wonderful smile of the babe looking out on the new world. Oh! the wonder of childhood! The miracle of birth!"

"*December 2d.*—I have all my life long been hinting at great truths along the course of my sermons. But usually the hints were far-fetched, and the connection with the main subject so

casual as to lose their force. Now these things seem to come to me in their proper order. I am very anxious now to be true to myself in all that I write. I have over-valued the thought of others long enough. Now I am chiefly anxious to express my own."

"*December 7th.*—It seems to me that I have touched a sweeter and better chord in the human heart than ever before. I am trying to *persuade* men to repent, not trying to *compel* them to, as formerly. It is charming to see the gush of grateful sympathy that rushes out to embrace me. God keep me from all bitterness; let me never drive people away from the truth. There was great wisdom in Christ's calling people to *him*, thus turning their love to him as a person to the benefit of the truth which he represented, and which in loving him they loved. So may I win others to me for the sake of the truth which I would give them."

"*December 8th.*—X. has so thoroughly imbued his mind with ancient symbols and modes of expression that his religious feelings naturally clothe themselves in mediæval words; whereas, my thoughts and feelings mock at these expressions and crave fresh utterance in few simple words. On Sunday morning I find it difficult to find words in the Bible simple enough to express my feelings of reverence and love."

"*December 11th.*—My course seems more plain to me than ever before. *I must study to help out my own thought.* I am full of it, and it is good enough to utter; at least, it is all God made me to utter, and therefore best for me to utter."

FROM LETTERS TO COLLYER.

"I have witnessed the annual assembling of the Fathers in Israel. It has been a sad and disheartening experience. Had it been a meeting of undertakers for the purpose of seeing Unitarianism decently interred, they could not have been more perfectly in character. They are droning over the same points which they were talking about five years ago, when I left here

and vowed that I would never return. *Now* it is my renewed resolution to keep out of these Association meetings."

But he did not keep his resolution; two years later found him again present, and making what a good judge spoke of as "the best speech that ever was made."

"*Brooklyn, November 7th.*—It seems wondrous strange to me to be here; to see so many things which I have always wanted to see, and to meet so many persons in a matter-of-course way whom I would have gone a journey to see. The first Sunday I spent here I was a listener in my own church. In the evening I went to hear Beecher. House full; singing wonderful; audience at first noisy and unworshipful, but thoroughly subdued at last by the prophet's power, and were dismissed after an hour and a half of calm emotion. Beecher delighted me. His sermon was very tame. There was none of his peculiar power in it. He looked weary and evidently felt so. What pleased me was to see how well he managed himself. There were three thousand people who had come to hear Beecherisms. Not one did they get. He tried two or three times to soar, but his wings were too weary, and he fell back into the arms of the Spirit and seemed to say in his heart, 'O Lord! I am faint and weary; use me to feed these hungry souls as thou wilt.' It was so sweet and child-like and commonplace from that great man whose brow was all aglow with power, that I became entirely fascinated by what he did *not* say, and I think you can understand me. The subject of his discourse was, 'I will have *mercy* and not sacrifice.' It is more divine to cure sin than to punish it, was the burden of his thought. I have no doubt that hundreds went away disappointed, but I went away filled, and dreamed about it all night."

"*November 25th.*—Yesterday I preached a sermon on '*Life*'; not a life, not immortal life, not any given quality of life, but *Life*. I was amazed at the expressions of thankfulness it called forth. I came home, went into my chamber, and wept

for gratitude to the Holy Spirit. I can not understand it. It makes me—all this love—as humble, meek, and tearful as a child. My constant prayer is, Dear Father, hold me close to thyself. Let me not stir a hair's breadth from the truth and right. Take away my pride, my folly, my ambition, and use me as thy child! I am not elated, dear Collyer, in the least. I am only happy and surprised. I have let my pen run on foolishly and rapidly as it would, but will not apologize to you because I want our letters to be mile-stones to date our progress from. If, hereafter, I have to sing a different tune, it will be interesting to remember this beginning."

Of the sermon here spoken of Mr. Staples says in his journal:

"I have for many years thought of this subject, but have never before been able to do justice to my thought upon it. I have now done the best I can do."

But he soon returns to it again, first in a written sermon on the text, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men," then in a speech made at Boston, then in an extempore discourse, and finally in the sermon printed in this volume on the text, "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

"*January 27th*, 1862.—In all your letters there was nothing so sweet to me as what you say of Emerson, and his remark about me. I tell you, Collyer, in this hot shower of praise which is always raining on us, a few drops of cool, sweet spring-water of criticism are like ice on the tongue of a fevered woman. I feel more and more dissatisfied with praise. My standing is so well fixed, now, among those whom I love that I can afford (and you as well) to grab at every bit of just criticism as a perfect God-send. And if we don't get it, we shall cease to grow. I understand perfectly well what Emerson meant. I had just returned from the army, and for some time felt uneasy in city society, and was so ashamed of it that I forced myself into an

unnatural indifference toward it. But my swift instinct felt it long ago and recoiled from it. Yet how acute in him to observe it. I like him the better for not liking what I hated in myself. I am glad you told him of our Washington life; it will correspond with so much that he has written and said about friendship. I was most pleased with your last letter because you sat down quietly to write it. I wonder if the letters I write in a hurry don't impress you just as your hurried ones do me? I can tell in reading the first sentence how it is with you, and suppose it must be the same with mine to you. I don't like a letter written out of your study half so well as one written in it."

"That Albano! my boy, [In Jean Paul Richter's *Titan*,] I was like him once! Now don't laugh; but it is true on a small scale. I had all his guilelessness, all his purity, and all his hunger and thirst, and infinite longing for a friend, and all his love of nature. Oh! how I have cried for some one to love me as a friend! It seems to me now if I had found him earlier it would have saved a great many spring-flowers of my spirit which got crushed out before he came. But I am so glad he came at all that I will not complain."

"*Brooklyn, January 28th.*—About books. It is of no use to bruise our minds over them. The time may come when we shall find ourselves directly in their range. I have overtaken and conquered many books for which I once had no relish. They are most useful when they help us unearth gold which we have caught glimpses of. It is hardly worth while to dig for the book's sake. A live man passes through such a variety of mental changes that he will, some time or other, *need* the book."

"*May 8th*, 1862.—I am so glad you are coming; one wants to look into the eyes of his friends now if ever. The terrible news from the army of the Potomac is just being cried through the streets, and it strikes my ears like a death-knell. Yet right here on the spot I do resolve not to die every day afresh as I have done. We must in some way keep our souls above it. I

feel that there is a calm, a sure retreat for souls like mine, to which I must flee in self-defense. Now is the time for us to draw our friendships close to our hearts, to find all the joy and help we can in simple, homely blessings, to meet our poor people with calm, upward look, and do all we can for our country just where we stand; but die for her, even though she is stretched on the bloody field in this awful storm, we must not, can not. I could die over this news; my heart would break if I would let it, but it must beat on for others. Still I want to see you awfully; it will do me good to feel the good cheer and radiant hopefulness of your far-seeing nature."

"I have just finished the January number of the *Westminster*. It is a great institution. What would we give for such a work in this country? It is a perfect monitor—firing wrought-iron shot and dreading no danger. That article on the Religion of the Working Classes was admirable. Do you know the author? I am fully alongside of those ideas, and have been for some time; and I can see plainly enough that the people who arrived there stark naked, losing their clothes in the struggle, are now clothing themselves in all that is beautiful and becoming; and the faith which grows upon such views will be firm as the hills, and the piety which springs from it free and pure as mountain air. Let us not, dear Collyer, fear to speak our deepest convictions. In the long run nothing else lives and pays."

"*May 14th*, 1861.—What you say of the thought, or absence of thought, which you feel in such an experience as the death of Mrs. R——, is but an expression of my own feeling. I should like to haul the matter over with you. I am satisfied that there is an iron frame of *fate* about this world, against which savage, Greek and Christian alike bruise themselves. It creates endurance in the savage, submission and fortitude in the Greek, and should produce all these mingled into faith in the Christian. We are apt to leave an element of endurance out of our system, which nevertheless is quite essential to character. The materials of creation seem almost to limit God.

The stuff seems to say, if you have one good result, then bad ones must go along with it. If teeth are to be set firm in gums, then they must cut hard ; if they set firm in the jaw, they must pull hard. If you have symmetry in woman, she must have pain in child-birth. If you have nerves to protect man from the elements, then they must make him suffer. If free will, then sin ; if growth in knowledge, then suffering from ignorance, etc., etc."

"*June* 10*th*, 1862.—What you said of my Easter sermon pleased me more than all the other good things that others have said of it. Yet I am satisfied that I have a deeper and clearer vein, which was not opened in that discourse. It was mostly local in its interests and application. You would be surprised to see a note which I received from Dr. Hill [then President of Antioch] on the subject. He said, 'The resurrection of Jesus is a "questioned event" only as the life of Napoleon Bonaparte or the battle of Bunker Hill.' I replied, 'That assertion is absurd on the face of it, for this reason if for no other, that no man was ever known to question or doubt those two historical facts, while some of the world's best minds and hearts have always doubted the physical resurrection of Jesus ; and while there is no increase of the former doubt, there is a rapid increase of the latter. If there is no difference in the historic certainty of the events, why is there this *growing* difference in the attitude of critics and historians toward them. ?'"

"*Staten Island, Sept. 2d*, 1862.—It is strange I have not written you long ere this. I don't know why I have not, but think it was because I felt a lingering assurance that you would come back to me again. It seems impossible that you have come and gone again.

> "'You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,
> But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.'

"I roam about here where we were together and think of you. That Huntingdon time is sweet to remember. I saw you enough to love you more and to esteem you more highly. It

seems strange when I read what you say of me. Were it not from you, I should throw it aside ; coming from you, I take it to heart and feel humble as a child. If it is true that very special power has been given me, there is small chance that it will ever come to much compared with the fruition of your rare gifts ; but such as I have, God give me a chance to use. I do feel more certain than I used to, and have seen my way more clearly ever since we were together at Washington. You helped me to it, and there is small danger of my believing myself in advance of you ; but you must think just as well of me as you can ; it does me good."

"*Staten Island, Sept. 16th.*—I believe old Tauler was right when he said, 'The aspiration and sighing of the soul is ever for repose.' And that repose comes to us just as we feel the necessity of our peculiarity ; that wherein we differ from all other things and forces in the universe, in that is our being a necessity with God, something without which he would be unrevealed. When one feels that to the centre of his being, he is happy, strong, self-poised, and as successful as gravitation. Now, my peculiarity is not the successful one with man ; but if I am exactly true to it, it will be successful with God. In times like these one must find some such rock to rest on in the general loosening of the old social safeguards. Every thing seems threatened with failure, and my best prayers and hopes among the rest ; yet nothing ever fails but—no, *nothing* fails, not even evil and wrong. I love to get back to the original elements and feel that the general thaw and dissolution will not carry these away. I love to look up to heaven these delicious Staten Island evenings, and dream of the everlasting spaces, and feel the old tranquillity of the universe flowing through me in spirit rivers. For man fails, and I love to feel that 'God's in his heaven ; All's right with the world.' "

FROM THE JOURNAL.

"*Jan. 1st*, 1862.—So another year is begun. I want to adopt Faith, Hope, Love, Industry, and Sincerity as my watch-

words for this new year. I would pray for them each day, and live by them. God help me ! Give me more faith in thee and in thy truth. Give me hope to see the brightest and best side of life and every thing ; love to every body, a love which shall take away all bitterness toward others, which shall reveal something lovable in all human creatures ; and sincerity, that I may walk uprightly and look at the world from the centre of my own life—that life which God gave me alone, that life in and through which comes all my strength."

"*Jan. 6th.*—This evening went with Mr. and Mrs. Mills to an artist's reception in New-York. It was a pleasant occasion, but no time for seeing pictures. Met several of the artists. Saw also Prof. Morse. I asked him if the wonder of his own miracle had entirely worn off. He said, No, that he often went into the operator's room and sat down and wondered, as if it had no connection with himself."

"*Jan. 19th.*—The old sermon went dangerously well, thanks in part to my improved delivery. Have heard many cordial approvals of it. But may I not be too ready to resort to such helps. May I labor and dig faithfully to coin thought from my freshest present life."

A man can sometimes answer his own prayers, and Mr. Staples answered this one to perfection. His Milwaukee sermons were seldom drawn upon, save now and then for the main thought, which was developed in an entirely different fashion. For the most part, his difficulty was not in finding subjects, but in choosing between the many that crowded upon him ; at one time, according to the journal, fifteen being dotted down and clamorous for immediate treatment.

"*Feb. 14th.*—I feel that the psychologist and the philosopher are about to meet and join forces."

"*Feb. 23d.*—I have received so many testimonials of love

and gratitude for my services that I feel satisfied. I have not another wish or want. I am rich beyond the wealth of kings in this heavenly love. I can only lie still and breathe out a speechless prayer that it may be ever thus."

"*Mendon, March 12th.*—Went to a surprise party at Perry's. It did seem strange to meet my old life of twelve years ago face to face. There was the same fiddler fiddling the same tunes."

This visit to his father's house, which lasted a fortnight, was doubly necessary; for his wife and Fred were there—had been all winter—and his long separation from them had made him anxious and unhappy; but besides this reason, for the second time since his settlement in November, his throat was in a state that made preaching quite impossible.

"*March 16th.*—What a joy it is to be loved by so many good people! It sweetens many a sad hour, and inspires many a pleasing hope. There seemed to be a universal joy at my return."

"*March 23d.*—It is wonderful how elastic my people are to the touch of spiritual impressions. It is because they have never been fooled with. Their feelings have never been played with for special effects, and whenever they are appealed to they respond freely, by a surprising sympathy."

"*Mendon, April 7th.*—Came back from preaching in Boston this evening, and found a fine little daughter and a happy wife awaiting me. O joy! that we are permitted to have another little girl. It is pathetic to see the joy of our dear Fred. He said once, 'Mamma, I'm glad we have this baby, even if it don't live.' A beautiful rebuke of our lurking fears."

TO COLLYER.

"*Mendon, April 2d.*—Here I am again, amid the scenes of my childhood. I still hope that I shall some time be here with you. Every rock, and tree, and brook has its history, which I

should like to tell you, but which is too sacred for other ears. And then I have a fond hope, a *very* fond hope, that I may some time visit the scenes of your childhood with you. Oh! think what a joy it would be! I tell you, brother, such experiences would distill a great deal of heavenly honey from our natures. It is a sweet spring morning, and nature looks bright as a newly-shriven nun. Every thing revels in sunlight. Flies on my window are intoxicated with the golden champagne; wrens, robins, blue-birds, and blue-jays are very musical with the affairs of love. I can hear the same brook sing which sang to me when a little boy, and filled me with wonder and pleasure. I often played in it until mother would say, 'Come, Gus, we are all going to bed; will you play in that water all night?' My better brother was all the time busy with his book in the corner. I had the brook full of water-wheels, and many was the scolding I got for worshiping there by moonlight, but it was a beautiful idolatry. It is a dear, dear morning. It does not make me prayerful as the orthodox call it and understand it, but it makes me feel like a spirit, harmonious and happy as the creation about me. I feel God all around me in this rare sunshine, and yet the thought 'Thou knowest that I love thee' stops all utterance. Indeed, I should feel out of all patience with anybody's prayer just now. My boy is brimful of joy, and runs from one thing to another with a merry way as if we were only a higher product of the same sunshine. There is a precious prayerfulness about his happiness which I can't help feeling must please God. O Lord! how wonderful are thy works; in wisdom and love hast thou made them all! Is there really any war in *this* world on this bright morning? 'An enemy hath sown tares.' What a cheap and weak yet natural account that is of life's contrasts. It takes the perspective of the biggest development to throw these lights and shadows into the harmony of One mind, just as the two rails of a railroad track come together when you can see far enough.

"Collyer, there is a great work for some one to do for our de-

nomination. We need an entirely new *cultus*. All our traps of Sunday-school books, hymn-books, liturgies, and the like must be changed some time. I wish we had a set of Sunday-school books which would ask and answer, not Scripture questions necessarily, but the real questions of the spirit as asked and answered by the best minds of the world, in the Bible and out of it.

"By the by, what do you *call* yourself? What should the new uprising of the soul among us and in Europe be called? We are *properly* spiritualists, but that name has been deflowered."

"*Mendon, April 11th.*—I have a little daughter, and her name is Cora Collyer Staples! [Collyer had named a boy for Staples, four months earlier, R. S. C., which, being interpreted, Staples said meant 'Right Shall Conquer.'] Thank God, this agony of expectancy is over. She was born on Sunday last, just as our poor boys, under Grant, were withstanding the shock of sixty thousand of the flowers of chivalry, officered by four of the best generals in their army. Oh! memorable day of joy and woe! Collyer, what will the orthodox say about the souls of those rough, profane, vulgar, wicked men who have baptized the name and cause of liberty in their best blood? They ought to damn them, but they dare not do it; every instinct of nature cries out for mercy for them, and God is better than good men. It is a splendid problem for them to chew over. It is clear enough to us. Every man takes just what he can hold. If a pint, it is filled; if a hogshead, it is filled; if the ocean, the supply is proportioned to the demand. Men who hold a pint are expanded by this last great consecration to hold a great sum of blessedness, and they will receive every man his penny."

FROM THE JOURNAL.

"Heard Mr. —— preach upon what Christianity has done for the world. He cited the worst parts of heathen civilization, and compared them with the best parts of the Christian, and

naturally made out a case. But he could have turned round and made just as good a case the other way. The difference between the world now and before Christianity is partly owing to the difference between its youth and age."

"*May 2d.*— Began a sermon from the text, 'Perfect love casteth out fear.'"

"*May 3d.*—Finished sermon. It has been a pleasure to write it. It was suggested by a remark of Fanny Hillard's, 'I trust in God's love.' It flashed upon me at once how central it was, and gave me great light."

"*May 7th.*—Had a delightful drive over Staten Island. I had no conception of its beauty before. Came home at twelve a happier and a holier man."

The upshot of this excursion, was that Mr. Staples went to Staten Island, to pass the summer with an ever-faithful friend. There in due time he carried Mrs. Staples, Fred and Cora Collyer; there, anon, came Collyer himself, and also Conway, to spend a few days. Those were days, every one of them, to mark with a white stone. Then, so Collyer tells me, Staples would talk for hours on immortality, in no spirit of curiosity, but with deep central earnestness. Had he already smelled the beds of asphodel? Were these long talks intended to prepare his friend for a "divine event," of which he had received prophetic intimations? "Spent all the time in precious talk," the journal says of these delightful days.

"Heard one of our Unitarian ministers preach. It was a tough sermon. In the midst of it, a matronly old hen began cackling from the fullness of her heart, and seemed the only inspired one at church or around it."

"*September 6th.*—Am so sick of thinking of our country's affairs, that I have made up my mind to turn to my own work, do the nearest duty most earnestly, and leave the rest to God. It

seems to me that if he were to hold up a table of stone, on which was written, 'Liberate your bondmen or you shall not succeed in battle,' it could not be more plainly manifest to us, than it now is."

On Sunday, September 14th, Mr. Staples's vacation ended, and the church was reöpened. The week previous had been one of the darkest of the war, and from out its darkness Mr. Staples wrote his first sermon, on the text, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope thou in God!" The first half of the sermon enumerates with startling force the reasons for depression, reasons which were emphasized by the presence of a rebel army in Maryland, with which, even while Mr. Staples spoke, McClellan was struggling doubtfully at South Mountain. The last half of the sermon takes up the last part of the text, "Hope thou in God." But it was not in "the *name* of the Lord," that Mr. Staples bade his people hope. It was in God as justice; in God as the life of the American people; in God as presented to them in the stern necessities of the hour. During the war I heard many sermons about it, some of them wonderfully strong. But I do not remember to have heard any which made my pulses leap, as I am certain this would have made them at the time, as it does even now, when the weary hand that wrote it has been resting for almost six years, under the sunny slope that he selected for his resting place. I can not report it. I can not make extracts from it, for it is a unit. I would print it all, but that the occasion which demanded it, is so remote from the activities and feelings of the present time.

But this sermon was only one of the many "war sermons" that Mr. Staples preached in Brooklyn, though he was never one of those who preached about the war because

such preaching was the easiest. Criticism of battles and campaigns, so common at that time in the pulpit, he left for those who knew much more about these things than he. His concern was with the great principles underlying the contest, with the humanities that on the one hand it endangered, and on the other summoned to its aid. The force in him, that in more peaceful times would have sought other channels of expression, rushed into this and filled it to the brim. His sermons on the war and its accompanying problems, were among the best he ever preached. It was unavoidable that such sermons should suffer by the lapse of time. If they could have been printed immediately after his death, while the war was still raging, they would have awakened a deeper response than any others. That they would not now, is neither their fault nor his. After the work which is at once universal and special, that is the best which most effectually serves the hour, though it should immediately after fail of honor and significance. And so it happens that the best work is not always best remembered. An inverse ratio oftentimes exists between a man's present usefulness and his future reputation. Mr. Staples knew this as well as any body, but present usefulness, not future reputation, was what he wanted to attain. He little thought that any of his sermons would be printed after his death. He did not feel that any of them were adequate expressions of his thought. That he had grown much, only assured him that he should grow much more in time to come. Why then are any printed? Because they are the best he did do, if not the best he could have done, had he lived longer. Because the people who knew how he loved them, and gave himself for them, know that he was anxious to express his deepest thought, only that he might strengthen and beautify

their lives; because his sermons did this when they were written, and they are certain they will do so now, and therefore certain that they have his full consent to bring a few of them together and share them with their friends.

But besides the fact that many of Mr. Staples's best sermons dealt with the war and consequently are now out of date, in estimating him from those contained in this volume, it ought also to be remembered, that since his death there has been a most remarkable change in men's theological ideas, a change like one of those great movements of the ancient earth, which lifted whole continents at once to a higher level. We are none of us now on the same level that we occupied six or seven years ago. In the Unitarian denomination this movement has been specially apparent. To a superficial observer it may seem that we have gone back, and so, in certain outward things, we have. But it was only because the tide was rising so fast, that Mrs. Partington became so excited and handled her broom so nervously, and it is only because the tide of religious freedom and radicalism has been rising so fast, that the ecclesiastical Mrs. Partingtons have brought out their creeds and shibboleths to sweep it back. During his Brooklyn ministry Mr. Staples was certainly one of the advanced guard of the denomination, as would more certainly appear, should more of his sermons of theology be printed. No man's thought was fresher; no man's ecclesiastical ideas more unconventional. In this respect the most of us are still far behind the place which he then occupied, while in the matter of pure thought, his qualities and tendencies were such, that could he have been spared to us, the radical wing of the denomination would probably have found in him one of its swiftest heralds.

But while radicalism is good, religion is better, and it

was as a teacher and inspirer of religion, that Mr. Staples did his grandest work, and will be longest and most lovingly remembered. That is not something which changes its relations to the human soul, in five years, or five hundred. It is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. Theological and critical conceptions may vary, but the sense of infinite protection, the hope of immortality, the entrancing beauty of the ideal, these things are perennial and eternal. But new paths may be opened to the old fountains, new approaches made to the holy of holies in man's heart. To give the oldest truths a new inflection is the preacher's highest task; to so present them to his hearers, that they shall be won by them into the sacred precincts of a higher life, this is his joy and crown. To do this was Mr. Staples's constant struggle and his supreme success.

In order to give the reader some idea of the scope of Mr. Staples's work, as well as in deference to his feelings of its inadequacy and unfitness for publication, portions of a number of his sermons are given with the few that are printed entire. But it ought in justice to him to be asserted, that he is one of the last persons to make extracts from. Sentences here and there are crammed with meaning. "Jewels five words long," are met with constantly. But every paragraph of any length in his sermons is so bound up with every other, that to detach one without injury is impossible.

His sermons are very uniform in their structure. The majority of them begin with the elucidation of his text and context. He was very fond of reading *into* the Bible as well as out of it. In this respect he makes me think, and has made others think, of Robertson. He is certainly as rationalistic, in the technical sense of making that seem reasonable in the Bible which is not so on its face. But in Robert-

son's case, this was justified by his idea that the Bible as the word of God must harmonize with reason; in Mr. Staples's case, by his idea that the men who wrote the Bible were simple, child-like, earnest men, and so most likely to be fundamentally in the right in their ideas of God and man and their relations, whatever surface blunders they might commit. This thought runs through the whole texture of his biblical criticism. Perhaps careless persons were sometimes misled, by his appeals to Bible witnesses, into thinking that he regarded them as supernatural authorities. Nothing could be further from the truth; it is never, in the last years of his ministry, the *super*naturalness of the Bible that he argues from, but its intense naturalness. At one time he says expressly, that it is only because the Bible is more familiar to us than other sacred writings, that it serves us better in the way of argument and illustration.

The poetry of his nature comes out in the expository introductions to his sermons; the strength of it in that which immediately follows—the development of his thought. This was the part he wrestled over and rejoiced in most of all. He was not content to impinge here and there upon great principles. He desired to know their sweep; to trace their curves till they returned again; to see them come full circle. His faith was of the firmest that "the world was made at one cast." He looked everywhere for unity. Given a principle, he felt that it must operate on every plane, in every sphere of life. His sermons ended almost invariably with a variety of illustrations; applications of his principles to the practical affairs of life. In almost every one of them "Extemporize" is written more than once, and the passages which he extemporized were those which told most on his audience.

Such being the structure of his sermons, it will at once appear, that they too were made at one cast and can not easily be shown in pieces. The illustrations need the development; the development, the illustrations. The only part that is not really essential is the exegetical beginning, though by itself this part was always full of suggestions and surprises.

But even if the reader could be put in possession of all the sermons that Mr. Staples ever wrote in their entirety, if he had never heard him, he would still be unable to appreciate his influence as a preacher. There was something about him which can not be reported. If I had known him ever so well I might have felt its magic spell and so have had a richer experience of my own, so have realized the power and wonder of the man as now I never can, but I could not have reported it any more than I can now. It was that mysterious something which we call *presence*. Nothing is so intangible, but nothing is more real. It is not here or there but it is everywhere. And Mr. Staples was thus gifted in a wonderful degree. Not always equally; far less so in the general intercourse of society than in the pulpit. That was his tripod, and when he mounted it the Spirit came and filled him with its power. It was a wonder to himself. Sermons that he had written with difficulty and pain, that had come to him without any gush or joyfulness, would sometimes, when he stood before his people, suddenly dilate, and grow with an afflatus that hardly seemed his own. Sometimes it would inform the words that he had written with new meaning, sometimes it would cast them scornfully aside, and substitute for them others more worthy of the inspiration of the hour.

For the very reason that Mr. Staples was thus gifted, his

printed sermons can not seem to others as they seemed to those who heard them in his living voice; saw them flash from his eye, quiver upon his lips, and exhale from every attitude and motion of his frame. It is not that the sermons are less, it is that the man was more. I can only hope that as those who knew him read the few I have selected, he will once more seem to stand bodily before them, and it will be less as if they read them than as if he preached them in the old strong, sweet tones, electrifying, sympathetic, that used to carry them away as with a flood. The real sermon is not a mere manuscript; but the manuscript is all that can be printed. That itself seems to me in our friend's case always noble, earnest; often great. But it is by no means a fair exponent of the effect which he produced upon his congregation. The kingdom of heaven as it voiced itself through him from week to week, was not in word but in power.

If these remarks on Mr. Staples's preaching, and introductory to the few sermons and fragments I have brought together are appropriate anywhere, is it not just here where he was in the full tide of his Brooklyn ministry? But to return to his sermon of September 14th, which was the occasion of my digression, we find that it was too flat-footed for some of his people. Of course the adverse criticism found him out; whereupon for September 28th he wrote a sermon on "The sphere of the pulpit." The early part of the sermon which was on the text "It is not lawful for thee to have her," was spent in showing that there is nothing that man can do or think, however remote in its inception from the ordinary teaching of the pulpit, which may not suddenly turn up a moral side, and come within its immediate reach. The conclusion shows to what extent he had

overcome the hesitation that he felt in Lexington about delivering his soul.

"There is no pulpit in our denomination which has so handsome a reputation for freedom as this has. It is generally known and admitted that any man who has a truth to speak in love, can speak it here; that the members of this society do not hold their opinions by so feeble a tenure that they are afraid to hear any other opinions expressed. And there is no prouder reputation to be won or lost. Numbers, wealth, influence, are only mockeries of a church, without a perfectly free pulpit. For this blessing we are indebted partly to your own good sense, and partly to the true and loving heroism of your former pastor. And while the pulpit is mine I do not intend it shall lose a prize so nobly won.

"No man but a minister can tell what an exceeding great joy it is, when in the simple pursuit of his duty he preaches words which all are glad to hear, and which draw forth increased expressions of love and approbation from his people. And as sweet as that is, so bitter is it, when in the same pursuit of his duty, he speaks a truth which men will not hear gladly, but which they mock at and turn away from. It seems as if he could not nerve himself again to prophesy other than words of peace. Yet I imagine a deeper hell, a hotter torture than this to seize upon one who for the love of ease, and for the sake of peace and the fear of displeasure, has sold his manhood with his liberty and refused to declare the whole counsel of God. From such a torment, O Lord, deliver me! and may our relation of pastor and people ever remain what it has always been, a union of love in speaking and hearing the truth, and seeking and doing the right, in knowing and living the good and pure and holy."

"*October 3rd.*—Am writing another sermon on 'Life.'"

"*October 10th.*—Have written hardly on 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.'"

"*October 14th.*—The Autumnal Convention met here to-day.

Convention sermon by C. C. Everett of Bangor. It was quiet, cool and pure as a mountain brook."

"*October 16th.*—Third day of convention. A few of us young men held a meeting at Mr. Mills's house after the morning session, to see if we could not effect some organization among ourselves of the radical wing of the denomination.

"*October 17th, Philadelphia.*—Stayed all night with Dr. Furness. Was thoroughly exhausted from excitement and want of sleep. There was a bright fire on the hearth, a soft pillow on the lounge, and no one in the room but the doctor and myself. He brought out the manuscripts of a new book which he is about to publish, and began to read in a soft, soothing tone about the Man of Nazareth. I listened until the music wrought its charm on my weary nerves, and I fell asleep. I slept, Oh how sweetly, breathing great draughts of repose, until the charm was broken, and I awoke to find the reading ceased and the book laid away. We had much laughter over the affair. The doctor said, 'Now, sleep is in the course of nature. My theory must be the natural one since it chimes in so easily with sleep.' Then we sat up till two in the morning."

Mr. Staples's reverence for, and love of Dr. Furness began when he was at Meadville, and increased until his death. In his letters and journals many of their interviews are recorded, and always with a deep and tender joy and thankfulness. The last entry in the journal is that of October 28th:

"A bright, charming day. Came back to Staten Island. It was too charming to be resisted."

So ended the first year of his Brooklyn ministry. Its outward success had been great; but its inward success, both for himself and for his people, had been greater. Coming up from Staten Island with his family, they went to house-keeping on Brooklyn Heights, where he could over-

look the bay and the island, and live over again in recollection the bright summer days, the lovely rambles, and the delicious talks he had there enjoyed.

TO COLLYER.

"*November 6th*, 1862.—I waited very impatiently to hear that you were once more in the old study-chair, and grinding in the old mill of duty. Your letter was very grateful to me, because I could not help feeling that with all the excitements of new friendships which you had just experienced, your interest in me must be decreased. And I stood gazing up into heaven whither I had seen you carried by the love and approbation of the wisest and the best, half believing that you would never come thence to me in the old way again. I was willing to stand aside and see you outstrip us all in your success, but with a half distrusting faith that you might love me a little better than you did any one else. Your letter came with the old, cool sweetness, which gives me entire satisfaction."

"*December 3d.*—I write while waiting in a carpet store for a few minutes. Have not got settled yet, but hope to this week. Never was a letter more grateful to me than your last, so generous and manly. I trembled a little at your delay. It was hard for me to speak so plainly of your good lecture, but I should not have been true to myself or you otherwise. God bless you! We shall grow, so long as we have such faithful mentors in each other.

"My wife has been sick unto death almost with diphtheria, and with all my other cares it has knocked hard at my nerves, but thank heaven we are all well again. I had a singular feeling of comfort and reliance in destiny during my most anxious hours. The fatalists and the spiritualists (not the rappers) are very near each other in that. John Tauler and Herbert Spencer begin at opposite sides of the river of life to spring their arch of belief; but both meet in the central key-stone of faith in an Omnipotence which gives and takes away as he

wills. And both draw the same inference, namely: the duty of self-surrender, with this difference, that one says with Marcus Aurelius, 'Let the gods give what they will or take what they will;' while the other says,'Blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

"*April 9th*, 1863.—I was reading over the other day the long pile of your letters, and it did me a world of good. I wondered if we should ever sit down in heaven and look over old letters written on the leaves of memory."

"*April 22d.*—Are you getting the full enjoyment of these sweet days? They come about our island like the smile of God. Never were such tender mercies so welcome. There is hope of peace on earth and good-will among men, so long as this old miracle of seed-time and harvest is wrought each year by the Father's love."

"*October 8th.*—The last time I saw Bartol, he said to me in a touching whisper, 'Brother Staples, if there is one thing for which I thank God more than another, it is that I have not met with great success as a popular preacher as I once hoped to do. I can see that God has been very good to me in that.'"

"*October 8th.*—The subject of optimism cannot well be got into a nut-shell, although yours is one of the best I have ever met with. It has untold height and depth of mysteries. If there is one thing which must be held absolute and unalterable, it is the eternal difference between right and wrong. That is our only anchoring-place."

"*November 5th.*—That is a real good point you make about women's treatment in the Bible. I tell you it is a shameful book in some of its chapters on that subject, and the time will come when it will be so regarded."

"*November 5th.*—That Washington experience was the occasion of all my new life here. It gave me self-poise and repose, without which neither of us can do tolerably well. Then come here and let us 'Orient ourselves' again, in a quiet thoughtless way."

The last of these quotations brings us to the end of Mr.

Staples's second year in Brooklyn. It began in hope, and better health than Mr. Staples had enjoyed for some time previous. Lincoln's proclamation of September 22d, threatening emancipation in January, "a bomb-shell with a three months' fuse," as Mr. Staples calls it in one of his letters, took a great weight from his mind and heart; and when the shell exploded on the first of January, he was filled with noble joy. His sermons came to him "feeling solid," and his wife was now at hand to save him from the agony of penning them. The little church began to think of raising its roof to admit galleries, and give room to the new comers. There was a many-sidedness in Mr. Staples that attracted many sorts of people, and so saved the society from becoming a mere family party. To the attractions of his subject-matter and his style, he added that presence, before spoken of, and a skill in reading and delivery, for the sake of enjoying which some who were not spiritually drawn to him managed to endure his politics and his religion. He did not regret that he could draw such persons. Certain that he never stooped to do so, he rejoiced, and fondly trusted that they might yet be inspired by his preaching, as well as entertained. But though some of his seed fell by the wayside, and some of it among thorns, the most of it fell into good ground. Especially beautiful was his influence upon young men. The memory of his prayers is even sweeter than the memory of his sermons. They exhaled from him as naturally as fragrance from a rose; at such times I have been told "he used to seem pure spirit," and "every body had a feeling that he was praying for them personally." I have read somewhere of a tree in India that grows to a great height, then at its top bursts into one resplendent flower, then perishes for ever.

The life of Mr. Staples was like that tree. His Brooklyn ministry was like that flower. Its beauty and fragrance heralded his death. Just as a long career of usefulness seemed opening before him, he was summoned to another field of labor. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," whispered the Spirit, and he went forth to tend them on the hills of heaven.

In February, 1863, he went to Boston for an exchange, and while there took a severe cold, from which he never recovered. From early in May until he went to Toledo in June he was very miserable, though it was during this time that he attended the May meetings in Boston, and made the deepest impression he ever made upon his fellow-ministers. His speech was no chance word. Like Sir Joshua Reynolds with his picture, he had been making it all his life. It was the germ of a new development of his favorite thought of "Life," which he had suddenly discovered in his mind. By the time he got back to Brooklyn it had attained the proportions of an extempore sermon, which he preached on Sunday morning. After that it grew into the first sermon that follows this sketch. But he was not satisfied with it even in that final form. It was written for the Toledo Conference, and was also preached in Meadville at Mr. Camp's ordination. It was dictated while lying in bed from sheer inability to sit up. After his return from Toledo and Meadville he seemed better. He had met many friends, and had got nearer Dr. Furness than ever before. But he soon began to run down again. The trustees of the church, not realizing how sick he was, voted to keep the church open till the middle of July, and he would not let them know how much he was in need of rest. On the 4th of July he preached a sermon on the state of the country,

which was printed in a pamphlet, but it was one of the least characteristic of his discourses. Then came the riots, which, with the harrying anxieties of "the battle summer" of 1863, drained him of his vitality at a fearful rate. When news of battles was expected, he would walk the floor through the night, hanging out of the windows to catch the words of the news-boys with their "extras," and following them down the street to procure their scanty bits of intelligence. When at last vacation came, it found him completely exhausted.

He spent the summer in Mendon, preaching several times in Boston, and this, too, when it seemed to those who were most with him that he could hardly live through his vacation. As his wife would sit fanning the flies away, lest they should shorten his precarious sleep, he would look so death-like, that again and again she had to listen closely for his breathing to assure herself he had not passed away. But when any one entered the room he would arouse himself, and seem almost like a well man.

He went back to Brooklyn in September, feeling that his vacation had done him little or no good. He staid for a few weeks with his good friends the Frothinghams, and while there found a book on consumption that convinced him that his days were numbered, though for months afterward he would have sanguine days and even weeks. In October he went to Milford, close by his old home, to deliver an address before the County Agricultural Society. He took great joy on this occasion. At last he felt and wrote about it to Collyer in a real, thankful, happy-hearted way, that his old friends and neighbors had heard him gladly. The subject of his address was "The Identity of National and Agricultural Interests." Never did the dear home-

places and the David Legg farm where he was born, and which he had hoped to one day own, seem so beautiful to him. It was well that it was so, for his eyes were not to feast on them again.

He made one more great effort to keep up till after the Autumnal Convention in Springfield. Many remember how he seemed at that convention—alert with intellectual and spiritual power; in body, the merest shadow of his former self. But he hated to give up. He took a stretching long walk with O. B. Frothingham, and Rush Shippen, and A. P. Putnam, and then the secret came out that he had no real strength left. After the convention, came long peaceful days of repose and rest; beautiful autumnal weather, in Brooklyn always the finest weather of the year. The days were sunny and the house still; husband and wife went about hand in hand; looked into each other's eyes, and *felt* what was coming. There was no need to say any thing. The mornings were passed in reading and writing; in the afternoons, when he did not feel able to go out, he would say to his wife, "Go and see such and such persons, and I will feel contented and lie still." When she returned, he would want to know all about her visitings. Never did he love his people with such tender love. November 12th, he wrote to Collyer:

"As my body grows weak, my nerves grow quiet, and my mind grows clear, so that I have seldom or never been able to sit down to a book or sermon with such a keen mental appetite. I am writing with great ease and satisfaction. My text last Sunday was, 'What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'"

This does not sound as if even then he was at work on the last sermon he ever wrote. But so it was. The ser-

mon was given to showing that man's ideal is heaven's real. This he preached on the 15th of November. A fortnight earlier he had preached his second anniversary sermon, at the close of which he had said that all he asked for was health; the church was full, and some change must soon be made. He would preach in the plainest hall, if only there could be room for all who wished to come. November 22d, he preached for the last time. It was the sermon about "The Thought of the Heart" that he had written a year before. As he was going to church, he took up the dumb-bells and gave them a few feeble swings. After the service, the society voted him three months' absence, fearing that if they voted him more he would not accept any; for he said he "felt ashamed to have the interests of the society suspended for him." The kindness of his people touched him deeply.

Then came Thanksgiving. Mr. Alger preached for him, and O. B. Frothingham came over to go to church with him. It was a sad thanksgiving, for as he sat in the pulpit, his people looked at his sunken cheeks, and almost transparent hands, and felt certain that the place which had known him to such good purpose, would know him no more forever. The sermon the next Sunday, was a direct attack on Mr. Staples's theological position, the preacher not perhaps realizing that he would not be able to reply. But he did so want to, and planned a sermon for that purpose, which was never written, much less preached. Late in November he went to Meadville, and for a time seemed to recruit wonderfully.

TO HIS WIFE.

"Every thing is perfect here at Mary's. It is such a comfort to have a room on the first floor; and it is so still, that I feel

in a kind of restful trance. Oh! such a burden is taken off my nerves by being away from the noisy pavements. As I lay in bed this morning and listened to the stillness, it seemed as if I could feel rest and health, come creeping into my very blood and bones. I now think you were right, in thinking that I needed rest."

But he soon relapsed into his old state. Then came the news of his father's death, and he came back to Brooklyn suddenly, expecting to go and see his mother. This was just before Christmas. At first he rallied a little, and then declined rapidly. About the first of January he became restless, and thought he must have a change. He was taken to Orange, N. J., where every thing was done to make him comfortable; but he soon wanted to be taken home again, and was very happy when he was carried there, for he was unable to walk. He lay on the sofa for several hours that evening, delighted to see every one that came in, not realizing how shocked they were at the change ten days had made in him. His wife, fearing he would overtax his strength, asked him if he did not want to be carried up-stairs. He looked up with a bright smile and said, "Oh! no; I shall never come down again; let me stay as long as I can." He lived just three weeks from that night. Knowing that a notice had been put in the *Inquirer*, that he was going to Fayal, he asked Dr. Farley to put in another, saying that the trip had been given up on account of his failing strength, "and that," he said, "will prepare friends far away to hear of my death." This faith in the love and interest of his friends was, during the last days, the source of all his deepest pain and sweetest satisfaction.

Very beautiful were the testimonies of affection that came

to him as he was wearing away. The generous provision made by his society for his voyage to Fayal, did him a world of good, though the voyage had to be abandoned. Their solicitude was as thoughtful as it was tender. Ellen Shippen wrote to her sister at Meadville:

"Such a relation it seems to me, never, or seldom existed, as this between Gus and his people. I have peeped into a heaven of love. Their arms of love hold him up. They have done their utmost to save him."

And then came such good letters from all quarters, letters taking for granted that the end was near, and that he would meet it like a man. From Dr. Hosmer and Dr. Furness; from Frothingham, and Weiss, and Freeman Clarke, and many others, they came in time to soothe his weariness. Hale's came when he was dying, too late for him to hear it read, and Dr. Bartol's after he had passed away. "Dear Staples," Dr. Bartol wrote, "I yearn to you; your precious presence is still in our house. It was so strong and good you left it behind. May you feel borne by the Good One you believe in. Take with you my greeting to those I love, out of my sight, you may meet by the way, and let your true loving spirit sometimes visit me, and light up my hopes, and touch me with the peace and joy to which you go." Collyer and Carlton came in person, all the way from their far-off homes, bringing him messages of affection, and getting from his strong faith and resignation, much needed reënforcement of their own.

When he was going to Fayal, he began to dictate a farewell letter to his people, but only a few sentences were written; enough, however, to show that the struggle for life was over, and the longing for rest had come.

"Dear Parishioners and Friends: I can not leave you with such an indefinite future before me, without saying a single word of farewell. How I should like to take each one of you by the hand once more, and say good-by. I still hope to see a great many of you, although I am not able to speak even in a whisper; for I know it does me good just to look into your faces, and feel the pressure of your hands."

"Of the past, with its memories and hopes, I can say nothing. I humbly hope that so far as it has been true, it will always help and cheer us in some deep true way. My thoughts now are all for the future, and I can not deny to you, that the future, where there shall be no more pain nor weakness, seems very dear and precious to me."

On the fifth of February, 1864, this mortal put on immortality. The end was very quiet, sweet, and solemn. He was watching for death, but did not seem to feel quite sure that it was coming then. During a sinking spell, the last he rallied from, his wife asked him, "Are you leaving us?" "I don't know," he answered in a wondering, child-like tone. A beautiful light passed over his face as he was going, and left it radiant, as with a smile shot backward from his emancipated spirit.

"So when for us life's evening hour
Soft fading shall descend,
May glories born of earth and heaven
The earth and heaven blend;

"Flooded with light the spirit float,
With silent rapture glow,
That where earth ends and heaven begins,
The soul may scarcely know."

The fifth was Friday. On Sunday, there was a simple farewell service in the church, Mr. Longfellow and Mr.

Collyer taking the principal parts in it. But the silent lips of the dead were more eloquent than theirs, as he lay before the pulpit, from which he had spoken with such gentleness and power. On Monday, a few of the nearest and dearest went to Mendon with the body, Mr. Collyer going with them. The next Sunday, he came back to Brooklyn, and told the story of the burial, and the story of his friend's life to his stricken people.

"The morning wore silently on toward the noon, and then we went into the sanctuary. There, in the most sacred place, on the table where he had seen the symbols of another broken body so often set, his lay, resting for a little while, until from the village, and from distant outlying farms, old friends, neighbors, and kinsmen should come to look into his face for the last time. They came, and they sang those good sunny hymns, that begin,

'There is a land of pure delight,'

and

'Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb;
Take this new treasure to thy trust.'

"Most grateful words were said for such blessing as had come to us all in this good life now done. Men and women wept sore, but were better for their weeping, and spoke gratefully of this great gift of God that had gone out from their town. Then, when the sun was near the mid heaven, we laid the dust on the breast of the dear mother he had always loved so well. Side by side we folded the dust of two men, the father and the son, together. And the first words I read, engraven on a white stone, as I turned away, were the name of still another kinsman buried there, a quaint old pious New-England name, 'Welcome Staples;' but I accepted it as a sign; it seemed like a 'well done,' after the weariness and sickness and pain, a whisper of the welcome that had greeted him in the heavens;

of the terrestrial here, the celestial there; weakness here, yonder power; death lost in victory."

Such was the burial, and for the life, though every word of the story about that was true and beautiful, this seems to be the truest and most beautiful of all:

"With a most genuine reverence for every true revelation of God through another, when once he had come to his perfect stature as a man, my friend held in deep reverence the revelation which came directly from God into his own soul. He accepted no high-priest, no, not even the highest, to bring him to God, or God to him. What we call miracle, or rather what we claim for miracles, fell away from his soul; in his vaster thought, he found no place for them. Sharp words were written to him by an eminent doctor of our church, for things said in the Easter sermon he printed, especially about the way he had interpreted the doctrine of the resurrection. He was no more to blame for not holding on to what he had once held, and what his critic held, on this subject, than the apple-tree is to blame for not holding its blossoms after the fruit has begun to set. 'Whatsoever things are *true*,' was the watchword of his ministry, the mark for the prize of his high calling. I think, beyond all I have ever known, he trusted with most absolute trust, joyful and constant, the nearness, fullness, and what I must call the adequacy of God. In the uneasy, feverish seeking after God, the running to and fro to hunt up new proofs of him, the timid, wavering wonder whether he can be here and there, or do this or that, he had no part or lot. God lifted him, at last, into the perfect assurance. 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me,' was the supreme and final rest found, about the time he came to be your minister, and from that time, through all his days of sickness and failing strength, never lost for one moment again; the Father, tender and loving beyond the loving tenderness of a mother for her child, the Father meeting us everywhere in our wandering, sin, and sorrow, as in

our loyalty, purity, and joy; supremely good in his most flaming judgments, as in his most infinite mercies, everywhere and always our Father, in heaven, on the earth, and in hell. And that is some poor hint of the man, my friend and your minister, in his loftiest relation to God and to you."

In token of remembrance, the Milwaukee Society have purchased Mr. Staples's library, which though not large, or very well selected, was an epitome of his growth, and contained some books that were to him the bread of life. The Brooklyn Society have placed upon the walls of their church an illuminated tablet of great beauty, recording the dates of his birth, installation, and death, with the text, "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." On the sunny slope in Mendon, a broad-based, severely simple monument of white marble marks his resting place, and symbolizes, as well as such things can, the purity of his life, its severe simplicity, and how firmly based it was in nature, man, and God. We speak of "the cold marble;" but when I stood by this monument, one summer day, the sun had crept into its very heart; and that was well, for nothing cold could adequately symbolize so warm a heart as this man carried in his breast. But he has other monuments than these. They are minds quickened by his thought, hearts touched by his sympathy, souls inspired by his faith, lives made more pure, and strong, and holy, by the word that in him was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld its glory, full of grace and truth.

SERMONS.

I.

LIFE.

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."—Col. 3; 3.

This text marks four steps in the growth of the thought which I wish to give you: Life; hidden life; life hid with Christ; and life hid in God.

Life is closely allied to the most central fact. If it is not being, it is the condition on which being passes into manifestation, and all attempts to retrace the steps of this process are sooner or later baffled by the mystery of life. So close is its affinity with existence that we can interpose between them no means of knowing what the one is apart from the other.

All the standard definitions of life define its *modes*, and not its essence. Schelling says, "Life is the tendency to individuation." But this only defines a process, and not its cause. Where individuation is, there may be life; but that process is not life, it is only a sign of life. Richerand says, "Life is a collection of phenomena, which succeed each other during a limited time in an organized body;" which is another statement of the signs by which the presence of life may be known. G. H. Lewes defines life as a series of definite and successive changes of structure and composition, which take place within an individual without

destroying its identity. But this only adds other signs of life, without saying any thing of *what* it is which produces this series of definite and successive changes. And all the definitions which I can find are open to the same criticism, that they describe the signs and not the essence of life. The proem to John's Gospel gives a very different definition. It says that in God there was life, and when that life passed into manifestation, it became the light of men, and was the true light, lighting every man which cometh into the world; that true light shining in the darkness of all time, giving to those who could comprehend it, power to become sons of God. This is, indeed, no definition to satisfy the exact sciences; but it is one of those guesses of genius which penetrates to the absolute unity, and anticipates, by many centuries, the last synthesis of the understanding.

The positive sciences seem to be approaching, by sure and rapid steps, the resolution of all phenomena into evolutions of simple force. The separate forces—heat, electricity, magnetism, light, and chemical action—are not, as once thought, ultimate and distinct realities, but are different forms of the same force, and are convertible into each other. Time and space are not ultimate realities, but only the necessary conditions of force. Matter is not an ultimate reality, but only another condition of force. We have no knowledge of matter except as combinations of forces. The chemist's ultimate atom is a figure of speech, the boldest poetic license. We can have no conception of an atom which is not still a compound of forces. The atomic theory of Dalton can go no further than to say that all chemical forces are related to each other in fixed mathematical proportions. The force of oxygen compared with the force of hydrogen is as eight to one; compared with carbon, as eight to six; with sulphur, as

eight to sixteen, and so on. But of the ultimate chemical atom it can say nothing, because it can know nothing. It only knows that oxygen force combines with other forces in proportions of eight and multiples of eight, and never in any other way; and yet from the combination of these forces is formed all that we call matter. Hence the substratum of materialism is spiritualism. The materialist can no longer take a pebble and say, "Here is reality; here is something which we know, and have no doubt about." For what is it that is real in the pebble, and what do we know about it? It is so much form, color, weight, brittleness, taste, and so on. That is, it is something which has power to produce in us a sensation of taste; the power to produce a sensation of color; the power to produce a sensation of weight, brittleness, extension, and so on. Or, in other words, it is a combination of so many forces; and further than that we know nothing about it, and can know nothing about it; for matter which is any thing else than a degree or quality of force, is unknowable and unthinkable. It is a curious fact that this old issue between materialism and spiritualism should have been decided in favor of spiritualism by science itself, which seeks nothing outside of matter.

As this great synthesis of philosophy goes on to its completion, the religious insight and thought will dwell with increasing interest upon this great principle of force, out of which has been evolved all that is, and will be evolved all that is to be; that principle, conditioned always by matter, time, and space, but caused by nothing conditional; that mysterious principle, in which rested at the beginning all the possibilities of creation, worlds on worlds, systems on systems, all forms inanimate and animate in existence, the

highest modes of being in this world, and those higher modes which we hope for hereafter.

Now, if science attributes all these results to force, religion will be very busy with its old analogies of life. She will say that the philosopher's infinite force is but another term for religion's infinite life. She will wonder if that force is not the Word which was in the beginning, by which all things were made; she will wonder if it is not the life which is the light of men; if it is not the light which lighted every man that cometh into the world; if it has not been shining in all the darkness, not comprehended by the darkness, yet always making of those rare, pure souls who could comprehend it sons and daughters of God. One is tempted to hazard a prophecy even now, that the dispute between philosophy and religion will at last resolve itself into a question of terms, whether this force into which philosophy resolves all phenomena is not the very life of God immanent in matter and mind.

To this mystery of life, then, we look with new wonder and hope; for it is the great hope. Because God's life has been in the world, it has not failed; and because his life is in it now, it can not fail; and because it must always be in it, it will never fail. There is hope so long as there is life, and there is life so long as there is God.

We are always running anxiously with our nostrums, and tonics, and pills to save nature; we fear and tremble at the general dissolution, and doubt, and death which seem near at hand. But chaos does not come back; humanity does not turn atheist nor infidel; the machinery of progress does not stop; because there is a soundness of heart in humanity, a light of life in man, a living spirit in the wheels of things which makes the hand that marks the hours of

growth move forever forward on the dial, whether the pendulum which ticks the seconds be swinging to or fro.

Jesus saw a new hope for the world, because he had come that men might have life, and have it more abundantly. And the highest reward which he offered to fidelity was, that through it we shall enter into life. "This do, and thou shalt live." And each important era in the history of his truth and the growth of his kingdom has been marked by the accession of some new life; sometimes rude, wicked, barbarian life it was; but still new life, and with it came new hope. From the east and the west, from the north and the south, this force has come in to drive out children of the kingdom, and to share the inheritance of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There is not a doctrine of the church which does not bear, to this day, traces of that poetic, mystic, acute, oriental life which it met at Alexandria in the first three centuries. There is not a form, nor a sacrament, nor an observance which does not bear the mark of the practical, politic, sensuous western life, through which it passed in Rome and Western Europe. There is scarcely a permanent result of civilization which has not grown directly or indirectly out of the accession to the worn-out life of Christendom of that terrible Indo-Germanic force which burst from its forest gates in the fifth and sixth centuries, and poured its great tides into the shriveled veins of Southern Europe. Such is the life which has come into the kingdom of God from the east, and the west, and the north. It remains for this age, we hope, to see the fourth and last promise fulfilled by the coming to the side of the life of Asia, Europe, and America, the warm, loyal, patient life of Africa. It remains for us to welcome to the kingdom, this remarkable type of ethnic life, which has hitherto lent itself with such patience

to the insolence and oppression of the other races; a type of life in some respects the richest and best on earth—cordial, loving, musical, courageous, as if its native sunshine and sun-warmth had crystallized in the very globules of its blood.

Let us never despair while there is life. The first question to ask about the promise of an age, or a nation, or an institution, or an individual, is, How *much* life has it? Even before the question of quality comes this of quantity; feebleness and sickliness may be very proper; they may never break a law, nor doubt a dogma, nor shock society, but they give small promise of future greatness. If our church has life, it will make itself a history, it will find itself a form, it will rally from its rebuffs, and outlive its changes. No matter if its life shows itself now in rude, strange ways; it will some time find its level among the checks and balances of its own activities.

This is the question which we have to ask ourselves as men and women, How much life have we? Not merely physical life; "for the life is more than meat;" but, Are all the energies of our nature awake? Is the mind reaching everywhere for truth? Does conscience ask of each act its own clear question, "Is it right?" Does the heart go out generously in love toward all that is lovely, and draw around itself all sweet and pure things? Does the soul keep a clear outlook through life and nature to God? Is it sensitive to the touch of those influences which come about it in choice moods, and make the air musical with their murmur, "and for days thereafter fill the soul with harp-like laughter"? This is the test of salvation. If one has this full and entire life, though he have along with it much that is bad, and imperfect, and false, in due time all things which he lacks will be added unto him.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh! life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want."

Life has two ways of working—the hidden and the revealed, the outer and the inner, the phenomenal and essential. It is not the least of its mysteries that, however far back we trace its steps, there is still a law within a law, a life within a life, which we can not find, but which is the source of all that we can find. It is always the hidden life which gives tone, and force, and reality to the outer life. It is the things not seen which establish or bring to naught the things that are. The planet and the pebble rest with equal ease in the just balance of hidden forces which, if shaken a little from their subtle poise, would shatter the universe. Each age values itself by its outward life of thought, and deed, and discipline. But history soon forgets all that, and values the age for the hidden life that was in it, of which the age had not dreamed, except through the prophets whom it stoned. No age seems romantic to itself. It is only in the after time that men find what music and strange rhythm there was in those days so dull to the multitudes.

And we all make this same mistake in our estimate of life. When we count our resources, or estimate our success, or question the fitness of our discipline, we seldom think that our best resources are hidden; that our truest strength comes we know not how nor whence; that sometimes when we are weakest, then is our strength made perfect; we seldom think that our best success is seen in nothing which we can put into figures or words; a success which has been wrested from the failure of all the world calls success; success in finding a great wealth of hidden life. We seldom think that that discipline is most fit which defeats our false ambi-

tions and checks our fevered haste, and brings us home to ourselves and bids us be still and know God.

How this inner life makes itself felt everywhere! Its presence or absence marks the widest difference there is in characters. It matters not what fine things a man's outer life is dressed in; if they are not pressed out full at every nook and corner, they seem outrageous. If your friend's house is bigger than his heart or handsomer, you would soon rather be in jail than to be there. It matters not how perfect a man's equipments of culture and convenience are, nor with what props and clamps of family and fortune he may be held up, if he has not the warm, earnest life of the Spirit, (a gift not of flesh and blood, but of the Holy Ghost,) he will soon give out that ring of sounding brass against which fine souls stop their ears. It matters not what creed he accepts, nor what ritual worships for him, if he has not felt God's presence in beauty, love, and truth; if his heart does not leap up when he beholds a rainbow in the sky; if he has not felt the thrill and glow which come from a sense of oneness with the infinite law and infinite love, he might as well be a "pagan suckled in a creed outworn."

But, on the other hand, wherever this inner life is, there are beauty, comfort, culture, worship. If your friend's heart is large enough, his hovel will seem like a palace; if his inner life is rich enough and childlike enough, it will always give you food for thought; and if his soul has exchanged look and answer with God, wherever he sleeps there is Bethel, and though his pillow be but a stone, there the angels ascend and descend.

Oh! the charm there is about these lives which are hid. What repose, what strength, what cheer! We look upon them as we look into deep rivers, and wonder how deep

they are, and to what height they would rise if resisted. We get near them in trouble, for their quiet cools our fever; their discipline never seems mysterious. The stream of change runs through their lives as the mountain brook runs through the miner's sieve, washing away quartz and sand, but leaving the grains of gold in deeper waters below. How poor all other success seems when compared with this of a tender, prophetic spirit life! If a minister has it, you give yourself up to him as soon as he opens his lips. Men and women break through all hedges of form and creed, and go to his baptism, though he preach in the wilderness or by a wayside well. If a preacher have not this hidden life, if he has never wrestled with the mystery of existence, he is a false prophet. He may preach doctrines ably and use forms ingeniously; but he can no more touch the springs of life, nor quench the thirst of souls, than he can draw water from an empty well by some ingenious contrivance of bucket and windlass.

We apply the same tests to books which treat of life. A few chapters will tell us if the author's heart is burning and breaking with the message which can not be uttered. If it is, the unuttered will fill the words with their pressure of thought. The sentences of *Jane Eyre* throb, as if ready to break, with the woes of life. One reads between the lines a great suppressed existence which palpitates all through the book, and feels, at its close, that the half has not been told. But there is no such reserve power about a novel of Scott. The style of one goes gracefully on in search of thought, like a gentleman of leisure taking his morning walk. The style of the other steps on haltingly under its burden of life, like a farmer boy carrying sacks of wheat.

When a writer can express all that he feels and knows, he

has touched his climax; and after that, no luxuriance of style can supply the loss of that untold sorrow and hope which would never go into words, and which were woe to him if he preached not his gospel. God takes care that every man who has life gets utterance, though his tongue be silent and his hand palsied. Sensations have their day, but the things not seen are eternal.

There is a rocket which goes up with a scream, burns itself out in rising, and falls a piece of burnt paper. There is another which is shot into the air a ball of silent fire, and when we think its force all spent, it bursts into a cloud of light, and falls in a shower of golden rain. How many revolutions, reforms, books, and men, has history seen rise and fall like the former! How many too, like the latter, have thrown their ball of truth into the pure spaces of thought, where, just as men clapped their hands and said it would come to nothing more, it has burst into showers of light, and rained its beauty on the unbelieving world!

Jesus brought life and immortality to light. They were already in the souls of men, half hid in darkness; when he touched them, they came out into light. Immortality came with the new life. It came because of the new life, just as the juices of summer bring into light the bloom and fruit which were hid all winter in the bud. It is no wonder that those men thought they had been born again, when they felt the strength and wealth of this hidden treasure. We think our orchards born again each spring-time; but it is the eternal miracle of life, ever new and old.

One does not wonder that the friends of Jesus quite forgot to write much about him for half a century after his death. Or, perhaps they did think of it, but would not try to put in words what was so unutterable. Peter, we are told, refused,

to the last, to write one word about his Master. He thought, no doubt, that it was idle to think of preserving, in such earthen vessels, the waters of a perennial fountain opened in every soul. After the hearts of the disciples had burned within them for fifty years, they gave us some snatches, hints, and fragments of what they had seen and heard; very unsatisfactory, no doubt, to them all; yet they builded better than they knew.

But the critic who comes to these Gospels with nothing but logic and lexicon, gets no more idea of the life which created them than a mason patching the walls of a house gets of the sweet Christian home which nestles within. Hence, the men who are now doing most to bring out the real life of Christ are men who go to the work in love, and sympathy, and reverence; men who are filled with the same life which Christ had; who look through the Gospels and between the lines of the Epistles as through so many windows opening into the life of that strange and wonderful time.

For this hidden life is truly called a life with Christ. It is here that we meet him, if at all. Such a life is hid where his life was hid—in God. This is the one channel in which all true souls run. The sweet and subtle fellowship of life is the free-masonry of spirit. It is the only membership in the church universal.

Here we are to look for the true continuity of church history. Its outward expression changes with the ages, and with the habits, culture, and quality of individuals; but the inner want, which tries to get expression through all religions, all churches, all dogmas, is the same. Hence it is that all religions and sects get nearest to each other in their devotions. The prayers and hymns which spring from the hid-

den life of all people are easily used by each one. The reason is obvious. Men cry out of one heart for the living God, and every soul feels the same hunger and thirst; but when they try to put the feeling into thoughts, and words, and symbols, they must use such as they find around them, in China, Persia, Turkey, Rome, Geneva, Oxford, or Amherst.

This is not peculiar to the history of religion. The same facts are seen in the growth of each fundamental want of our nature, and the general idea which controls its activity. If we were to look for that which the industry of all time and people has had in common, we should not find it in the plows, hoes, axes, and scythes which have been used in all past ages; we should find it in the abstract idea of the useful which tried to express itself in these different implements. If we should try to find the continuity of the history of government, we should not find it in the different forms of society which have had their day since the race began; but we should find it in the abstract idea of the just, which tried to express itself in all these imperfect forms of organized society. The history of art presents the same phenomena. The different ages and places have had their sects and schools, but all have had the same moving impulse—the idea of the beautiful. It is not strange, therefore, that religion should present the same features of history which we find in the growth of all fundamental wants. In creed, and form, and holy days, it must needs be that one should say, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos." The true union is a union of spirit, and a bond of peace. The true fellowship among brethren who differ in gift and faith, as the hand from the foot, or the ear from the eye, is a fellowship of that perfect love which casteth out all fear. We

can have no dominion over each other's faith; we can be great helpers of each other's joy.

And all the real experiences of life bring us back to this one conviction, that the hidden life is the life with Christ, the life with *all* the good and true of earth and heaven. When we weep, we ask not about the creed of him who weeps with us; and when we rejoice, we do not care for the creed of him who rejoices with us. In days of ease and success, when we sleep soft and wake merrily, and our hearts are waxed light, we make a pastime of building our creed play-houses, and saying no one ever had such fine ones; but when the hour of trouble comes, when our hearts break and our hands fail, we leap out of these houses, and look about for loving hearts. We meet all creeds by death-beds, and at festive scenes, and on exchange, and in all real experiences. If you should stop a joyous company of men and women who are at one with each other in some good human impulse, and say, "Each ten of you believe the other ninety are lost souls!" each one would start up as from a happy dream, and begin to say, "Lord, is it I?" In ninety-nine moods out of a hundred most communities have a common impulse and a common fellow-feeling; but the other mood is the queer theological fit, and that makes a difference.

It is cheering to see the loyal churches of this country forgetting their differences to unite in a common cause of charity and love. In Brooklyn, nearly sixty churches of different creeds meet and work together. Thus, a common trouble brings us back to that common life where we meet Christ and all who are his. And any man who is so dead to the prophecy of the age that he can waste these great historic days in whetting his sectarian sword, and drilling

his squads of proselytes, and making war on the great army of disciples who are too busy doing good, to defend themselves, is a rebel toward God, and Christ, and humanity; he is a mere Don Quixote, fighting wind-mills which are grinding corn for a whole people.

All earnest men and women are drawing nearer and nearer to a common hope and a common inspiration. They are feeling, as they have seldom felt, the riches of this common life hid with Christ. They feel themselves upheld by it when the outer life fails them. It is a calm, warm shelter from the noise and fever of the world. It is a light shining in the darkness. It brings them into a more sweet and tender union with all good and true souls about them. It is regrouping society in new and better relations. Those who have tasted the blessed life belong to the invisible church, whose ties are bound on earth and in heaven. Thousands of its members have never seen each other; but they know each other—they are friends, and belong to one family.

> "Where now with pain thou treadest, trod
> The whitest of the saints of God.
> And that great Life, transfused in theirs,
> Awaits thy faith, thy love, thy prayers."

And finally, it is said that this life is hid in God. This life, which first appeared in force, rising up through all kinds of existence, at last becomes conscious of itself, and goes back again to its source in free consecrated thought and love. Placed by birth at the furthest remove of weakness from God, man struggles back to him through a discipline which brings him more and more to himself, and gives him the new and entirely unique gift of personality; and when he comes to himself, he goes to his Father.

Life ultimates in God from instinct, from weakness, and from reflection.

And first of all, the finite hides itself in the infinite from simple instinct. The original religious impulse is like the first cry for food, or the first effort of art or government—the simple reaching out of the soul to find something to feed upon. And to the end of life this instinct is seldom superseded by a better motive. One may, for a time, exchange the simple impulse to worship for some motive of policy or principle, just as one may, for a time, eat by rule and measure; but the healthful nature learns to trust more and more to instinct, and worships because he loves to worship, and when and where he feels like worship. Fine souls will always love to feel that their lives are hid in God. They will feel it in bright hours of clear sight, when they see the infinite life embracing, guiding, and blessing all things. They will feel it in the hours of inspiration, when truth and beauty seem so near they dare not say that they think for themselves. They will feel it when they are alone, and say that they are not alone, but God is with them. They will feel it also in sorrow, trial, and doubt. Then there is no comfort until they hide themselves in God, and see that he is the only light which casts these shadows from events. It is an instinct which outlives all changes in theology and religion; an instinct which has seen a thousand philosophies live and die around it, and yet is clearer and surer to-day than it ever was before. For it is the irresistible impulse of that life which came from God, to return to and recognize him in the last and highest possible form of life—conscious love and trust.

This life hides itself in God from weakness. No man can carry the burdens which it will compel him to take up,

without asking himself whether he must carry them all alone, or whether the universe is not made so that it will take up every true thing and help him carry it. If he carries on the war which this life will compel him to wage against error and sin, he will learn to trust in that wisdom which works in the structure of things. He will learn to hide his weakness in its strength; to reckon his resources by its laws; to trust it for the success of each good work, and the fulfillment of each pure hope. He will cling to life in the midst of death. When the present hope fails; when bad men prosper; when the bad cause gains; when events mock at Providence, and the hour contradicts the age, then he must take shelter in the thought of infinite life, "He is the God of the living and not of the dead." To his universe no force can be added, and from it none can be taken away; for it is full of his life. Because he lives, all which true life seeks must live also. And so long as men try to make life God-like, as Christ did, they will hide their lives, from sheer weakness, where Christ's was hid—in God.

And this life ultimates in God also, through the necessity of thought. The mind can not give up its old faith that the creation has a cause beyond itself, and a cause greater than its greatest effects. Nor will it yield to the jeer of philosophy that other faith, as old as the first—that effects into which no element enters which was not wanted by the cause, give us some hints of the nature of the cause. And among the effects of creation, the highest and most wonderful are the cravings of this life of thought—this conviction that there is something better than the best of the world; something more beautiful than its beauty; something truer than its truth. It is not in the nature of thought to rest until it has made this last sublime synthesis of all diversity

in one living, intelligent unity. It can not rest until it has fled from all the discord of life's detail, and hid itself in the harmony of God. Is it not wonderful that this thought of the Infinite should have ever crept into the thought and language of a being so frail as man? It did not come through the senses. No eye has ever seen, no ear heard, no hand touched the Deity. It did not come from experience, for all men have been reared in the same rigid regularity of law. It did not come from reasoning, for the best thinker of to-day can not logically account for the strength and clearness of his own belief in God. And yet men in all times, in all languages, have thought and written about God. From the rustling of a leaf, or the creaking or a limb of a tree, or a sudden flash of light on some other little, trivial event, men have sprung to the sublime conclusion of the existence of overruling powers, and the presence of a spirit-world peopled with the immortal dead. Against the senses, against experience, without reasoning, men have had this great thought of God; they have clung to it in life and death; they have tried to group all facts around it as their permanent centre. And to-day it fills the world's thought and sustains its hope more fully and securely than ever before. Religion, in its most child-like instincts, can have nothing to fear from thought in its most rigid methods; for they are the same life running through different channels to hide itself in the same God.

This, friends, is my thought concerning the life which is hid with Christ in God. I have already spoken too long; but the subject is so central that there is no end to its suggestions. It is the one thought beside which we ought to measure ourselves and estimate our discipline. As the changes of our experience go on, if we find that we

gain more and more life of mind, heart, and soul, it matters little what else we lose. We may fail in our affairs, we may come far short of our aim, we may die with our plans half-finished; but if through toil, and tears, and struggle we have found the "good part," the "pearl of great price," the "treasure in heaven," all is well. This is the compensation for the inequalities of fortune, the key to the mysteries of discipline.

At a recent concert in Brooklyn, Gottschalk, the pianist, played a fantasia, into which he introduced the air of "Sweet Home." One of its variations was an instrumental wonder. He struck the keys powerfully, and threw out a great volume of tone, which, as a whole, was neither major nor minor, concord nor discord, harmony nor melody. You could, indeed, detect in it elements of melody and harmony; but before the ear could combine and enjoy them, they were lost in the roar of the chromatics. By a skillful use of the pedal the player soon hushed the discords, and caught, on a few open keys, the pure tones of the simple melody. And, if you listened carefully, you soon heard an undertone, like an echo, singing from afar, the old familiar air. It seemed to say to me, "Out of that discord which gave you such pain sprang the life of these vibrations which are singing 'Sweet Home.'"

Life seems to me sometimes like that variation. Man, in his haste to grasp the object of each passion, strikes every key in its tremendous octaves. The instrument raves with its vibrations. At first the sound gives nothing but pain. We can indeed detect elements of harmony, and melody, and pure tone; but they flit so quickly among the struggling discords that they give us less pleasure than pain. But if we listen, from the hidden life of the spirit we soon

detect an undertone into which the discords pour their dying vibrations, singing, like an echo, the reconciliation of events, the song of "Home, sweet home"—the song the morning stars still sing in tune with angels' voices, "Glory to God, good-will to man."

II.

KNOWLEDGE THROUGH LOSS AND SEPARATION.

"NEVERTHELESS I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." —JOHN 16 : 7, 13.

I MUST think that there was a touch of sorrow in the tone with which Jesus uttered these words, nearly akin to despair. For think with what argument, and persuasion, and entreaty he had tried to fix the hearts of his friends upon the truth and the right, and not upon his bodily form and presence! How he had repeated the declaration again and again, that he was only the agent of God; the instrument of inevitable spirit-law; the finite example of an infinite mercy, and justice, and love. In every possible way he had tried to force this truth upon them. They thought their Messiah immortal on the earth; but he said, "I shall be put to death by these religious sects, whose hypocrisy I have rebuked." They thought he would be a great king; but he said, "The Son of Man has not where to lay his head." They thought he would call to his aid a legion of angels, if need were, to fight for him; but he said, "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight for me." They said, "Show us the Father;" and he said, "The Father can not be seen, except as his nature is seen in the na-

ture of goodness, beauty, truth." At one time he illustrated his meaning by saying, that he was merely a door through which their mind, and thought, and love, might go in and out, and find pasture. At another time he says, "I am only the vine of which ye are the branches; but my Father is the husbandman. He is the soil, the air, the light, the moisture in which we all grow and have our being." Again, he says, "I am the way, the truth, the life, by which men go to the Father." But neither statement, nor argument, nor illustration could turn their thoughts from the form, and voice, and bodily presence of one they loved so much, to that higher fact of which these were the symbol; and still they clung to the hope that he would restore the kingdom to Israel. They could not cut the rope which held them fast in the haven of his friendship, and strike out into the great ocean of truth, and beauty, and love, steered alone by his spirit and truth. Yet he knew, and taught, that there was no other way for them to inherit eternal life than to do as he had done. And after all forms of speech had been exhausted, to prove that God was the sole Infinite Spirit, and he was a door by which souls were to find him, Philip says, "Show us the Father, and that will satisfy us." From that moment, Jesus seems to have seen that it was best that he should leave them; that they would not be able to conceive of the absolute reality until it became associated with his *invisible* life; that while he was with them, he was away from them; and could not meet them again, until they met him on the plane of his truth, and love, and hope; until they should suffer, and weep, and rejoice for principle. Then he could meet them, and they him. Then he recounted the trials the truth would cost them, as if half regretting that it must be so. "The world will hate you;

but remember that it hated me before it hated you. They will put you out of the synagogues, and they will kill you, in the service of God. But because I have told you these things, sorrow hath filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is best for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you. When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth."

And so it proved. They were never further from their Master than when, with dull eyes and heavy ears, they stood close by his side, and saw his face, and heard his word, and knew not that it was Jesus. But when he was gone from them, and all their proud hopes and vain ambitions were buried in his tomb, then they retired to their own souls, their central life of thought and love, and there they met him, and they said; "Lo! he was with us by the wayside, and we knew him not." And when they began to look around for the result of the loved life, and found that it was all given to their keeping, in nothing more tangible than thought, and spirit, and principle, they were roused by every motive of common friendship to stand up and vindicate it. And when, for this fidelity, they met with hatred, and stripes, and flames, and prison-bolts, then he came to them as never before, and their eyes were opened, and they knew him. Poor disciples! But poor we, as well! For their case is ours, because it is that of human nature. The things which are close around us, which we look upon daily, and regard as close companions, lose their best meaning as the symbols of spirit and thought. It is only when sickness, or failure, or death has given them distance and perspective, that we begin to see that their greatest worth was hidden by familiarity. The last reach of spirit-culture is the power of holding

common things off in the spaces of thought, so as to see them as they are, and as they will seem to us when taken away. It is our weakness that makes the discipline through which the disciples passed ever necessary to us. For it must be possible for us to look upon blessings, while yet they are ours, as if they were God's talents at interest. It is possible to regard friends, home, wealth, opportunity in relation to the end they are meant to serve in our tuition We may see in the child we play with daily, the angel we should think of if the child were taken away; in the wife or husband who shares life with us, that wealth of love and blessedness which we shall see and realize when they are dead. It is possible to enter into the treasures of health and appropriate the air, and sun, and sky, and stars, and free motions, as we appreciate them when we are sick and see no sun, nor sky, nor stars. But we do not do it. We are always looking far away for pearls which are sprinkled thick in the common road we walk in. We wait for some miracle of mercy, and see not that it is fresh every morning, and renewed every evening. We think only of the visible; we do not penetrate to the inner law, which is the light of setting suns and the life of earnest souls, and is not subject to change. We all talk of angels and saints; did you never think that there is not a home, however homely, which has not in it the germ of angels and saints? yea, real saints and angels, as you shall believe them if God takes from you the outward form, that oftentimes annoys, and distresses, and separates.

> "Alas! we think not what we daily see
> About our hearths—angels, that are to be,
> Or may be, if they will, and we prepare
> Their souls and ours to meet in happy air—

A child, a friend, a wife, whose soft heart sings
In unison with ours, breeding its future wings."

The world is always looking for a coming man as unlike real men as wings would make him; but it sees and hails only the going man. One often thinks, when he sees the kid-glove hero-worshipers who have no sympathy with living heroes on account of their roughness, what would these adorers have done had they lived when their hero did? All the men who are crowned with leaf and blossom from the tree of life were men who were heirs to all the ills and annoyances of flesh and blood. Some were wild and reckless, torn by their muse as he had been a demon or fury. Some were cold and stony, and would not see you in the street, nor seek your society nor your opinion; and that while they were the instruments of some great social truth which would warm and bless all coming time with good-will and good cheer. And some were wicked and miserable in life, as if the flint of their genius could only give out the consuming fire of truth when struck against the cold steel of sin. And others were stern, caustic, and contentious men, who rebuked every form and agent of wrong, and, thrusting through the iron harness of show, and cant, and conformity, pricked the very vitals of iniquity. They troubled their friends, they vexed their enemies; they shocked the prudent, and confounded the wise; and seldom have the great men, the saints and heroes, been recognized as such by common consent until they were so surely dead, and so securely buried, that there was not the slightest danger of their saying something to shock their friends, or of their espousing some cause which was not popular at court. Nor is this wholly wrong. Sin is not the less sinful because

a genius sins; nor are coarseness and ill-breeding less offensive, because saints are sometimes wrapped in such mean disguise. But the wrong is in forgetting that this treasure is always given to us in earthen vessels, but the power is not the less of God.

To those who walk beside them, great men seem mere common earth; but distance makes them stars. We hear of a great man, and make a pilgrimage to see him; but when we get there, instead of the embodied truths and beauties, the walking melody and the breathing poem, which his works had led us to expect, we find a man, sometimes cross and sometimes crotchety, sometimes tired, or cold, or hungry, and we go away disappointed, and think we had better staid at home; and so we had. For such meetings are not meetings, but separations, as half of what men call sociability is. When you meet a man on the plane of his thought; when you see what he longs for and aims at, and strives and prays to realize; when you have felt the glow of his inspiration, and the power of his best mood, then you have met him. His inner being has clasped hands with yours in upward flight; soul with soul has exchanged look and answer; spirit has recognized spirit, and there can be no hope of such another reunion on the plane of common intercourse. I never hunt lions, but always avoid them. If destiny brings us together, I am glad; but seldom satisfied. For I have met them before in a so much sweeter and holier way, that the shaking of hands and inquiring for health seems outrageous. That friendship is best and purest which rests upon the hidden rock of a mutual trust, which does not crave recognition, nor gift, nor token between souls which, having once seen and known each the other, know that nothing can disturb and separate them.

So long as Jesus lived, there was but a partial friendship between him and his disciples. He spoke of fact, and law, and reality, but they thought he meant show, phenomena, or immediate fruition. And the difference between them was so great that he could say pitifully, "Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" They asked to sit at his right hand or his left in a new kingdom; he said he had no such gifts to bestow. It was in this mood that he said, "The Spirit of truth will never come unto you until I leave you." Have you never felt that same conviction? Have you not felt conscious of a life, a love, an aspiration which you could not express, and which your attainments gave so poor a hint of that you almost longed to die, in the hope that this inner life might then rise in its beauty upon those we love? Jesus was certainly right in his conviction of what was best for his friends. For when he was buried from their sight, the Spirit of truth brought all things to their remembrance which he had said unto them. And then they first saw and knew him. And the further we pass from the days in which he lived, the more dim and obscure the mere accidents of his life are made by the mists of time, the more clearly do we distinguish the transient from the permanent, and the nearer do we draw to the essential beauty of his being. Now he is a spirit and the life which assimilates with all that is true in the spirit and life of the age. But did you ever try to imagine what would be the effect if he were alive now in the body. How many of those who say so much and sing so much about longing to see Jesus—how many of them would recognize him or have any thing to do with him if he should come into our streets, and churches, and houses as he went into Jerusalem? If he were sitting in Trinity

church, and a colored man should ask for a seat in the pew, do you think he would refuse him? And if he did not refuse him, do you think he would be allowed to sit in Trinity church next Sunday? Or imagine how seldom you would find him where show and fashion are, and how often at the ragged school, or with the newsboys, or the prisoner, or abandoned women, trying to help, and bless, and reform them. Think how obviously the slave is included in his idea of the neighbor, as illustrated in the parable of the good Samaritan; and how severely he would have rebuked such a terrible sin as slavery in church and state. Would he be any more popular than when he was before in the flesh? There is no soul-friendship between such and Jesus. Those who have not tasted the wine of his life, nor heard the tramp of his truth in the best spirit of this age, know only Christ in the flesh; while he who has felt most deeply the age's sorrows and aspirations, who has watched on the lone mountain for streaks of morning, who has drunk most deeply from the cup of love, and eaten most of the bread of vigorous life, he has known Christ the Spirit. To him the Spirit of truth has come, and it will guide him unto all truth.

Now, these thoughts ought to give us a little comfort concerning much of the discipline of life; for the Spirit of truth is also the comforter. Providence unsheaths the inner meaning of our being by laying off the concentric rings of familiarity which hide it from our sight. Sometimes it is done gently by the untwining of time. The childhood whose wealth we did not half see as children, rays out its full light to our maturer eyes. As we go away from it, we get nearer to it, until old age returns and renews it. And as each present becomes past, we no longer see it through

a glass darkly, but face to face. The children who grew around our home-lives until we hardly knew a separate life from theirs, gradually separate into so many separate groups, and become the centres of a new social life. And as they stand off in the pleasant distances of their new relations, they assume a new worth in parents' eyes, and much is seen and lived over which was missed when passing. And the same is true of each privilege which, in the hurry and anxiety, and sometimes in the sickness and pain, of its enjoyment, was but half appreciated or understood. Time carries them on, gives them new grouping and perspective, and then we first perceive their beauty.

But seldom is any soul disciplined so gently. The rule is, that sorrow or sickness or death does for us at once what perhaps time might have done. We incrust our lives with an indifference which utterly hides their real worth, and then trial comes to break through the shell and release the spirit, and show us wonderful things out of the old love. The business-man has been blessed with success until he can not realize what its worth is. He accepts it as he breathes air and drinks water. There comes a time when God seems to say, "It is expedient for you that it go away; for if it go not away, the Spirit of truth will not come." A crisis crashes through all his fair hopes, and the truth comes to him. A wiser and more grateful man, he begins again, with a new appreciation of what before was stale matter of fact. And how often do we learn to love children by losing children! How often do we learn the real worth of the child when it has become an angel! Out of the deserted places and through the silences comes the better part which flesh and blood had hidden from us. Fathers and mothers may safely look to the time when they are no more with

their children, for a love and appreciation which they did not get while alive. A mother's love gets to be so like breath, so like the milk that nursed us, comes so surely like sunrise, and work so steadily like God, that we can not realize its height and depth until we see it at a little distance; until it is removed far enough from our bosoms to be measured by all other love; and then the Spirit of truth and the Comforter comes, and we meet our mothers.

And do you doubt that we shall love our country as we have never loved her before, since we have been held over the abyss of anarchy, and compelled to think what it would be to have no country, or a dishonored one. The blood of patriotism was almost dried up in hearts petrified by prosperity. We were not aware how much we loved our father-land until it was threatened with disaster; and then we sprang with open arms, as a mother springs from her sleep to catch her falling child.

Much that we call the painful separations of life are really the spirit meetings. And much that seems like taking away our treasures is but the unearthing of them, or striking off the quartz that imbeds the gold. A young prince sent an iron egg to a lady to whom he was betrothed. She received it in her hand, and looked at it with disdain. In her indignation that he should send her such a gift, she cast it to the earth. When it touched the ground, a spring, cunningly hidden in the egg, opened, and another egg, this time of silver, rolled out. She touched a secret spring in this, and a golden yolk was revealed; she touched a spring in the yolk, and a crown was found within; she touched a spring in the crown, and within it was a diamond marriage-ring.

How often we throw down the gift of daily blessings in

despair, or how often does death dash them to the earth; and while we weep for them as lost, lo! a bright silver meaning, of which we had not dreamed, rolls out of the iron shell. And in these again we touch more subtle springs, and behold, a golden spirit flies forth from the inner mystery, and out of this again the marriage-ring, in token of our union with God.

In a certain city, a day was fixed to elevate the statue of its patron saint to its lofty pedestal. Great care had they taken to give the work to the best artist, and select for it the most commanding position. The day arrived, and with it the statue. All eyes were eager to see it; but when it was uncovered, instead of the image of their saint, they saw only a huge, unsightly mass of stone. It had neither form nor comeliness. The rage of the people was great, and threatened to destroy the artist. But, urged by his entreaties, they began to elevate the statue. And as it ascended unto the heavens, it began to assume grace and beauty. And when it reached its resting-place, behold, it stood forth in awful grandeur, as it had been a living god, descended from Olympus.

And so does life, while near at hand, appear large and uncomely. We can not take it in at a glance. We can not hold it far enough from our fevered hearts to see its divine proportions, so sorely does it press upon us; and sometimes great is our disappointment, and we murmur against the great Artist. But when the image ascends to its resting-place, all its rough angles are rounded, its hard lines softened, its proportions harmonized; and we see, as we could not before, that this rude mass contained the image of the heavenly, the guardian spirit, the patron saint, the all-watchful and beautiful God.

III.

THE THOUGHT OF THE HEART.

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."—Prov. 23 : 7.

This text, in its connections, is used as a caution to one who would judge of the real feelings of a host merely by his proffers of hospitality. It warns such a one not to be deceived by any outward appearance of cordiality; for he will find that his host is not necessarily such as he promises with his lips, but such as he is in his heart. "Eat not the bread of him who has an evil eye, nor long for his dainties; for as he thinks in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink, he saith to thee; but his heart is not with thee." The text might be used with excellent effect to enforce the duty of perfect truthfulness and sincerity in social relations; to show the folly of surrounding ourselves with those who expect one thing while we mean another, the impossibility of concealing what we really are in our hearts by any expressions of unreal cordiality or unfelt interest. It is much to be regretted that society is so seldom allowed to group itself by the natural laws of spiritual affinity, and is so often forced aside from its natural tendencies by artificial attraction or repulsion.

Owing to a multitude of little falsities, almost every man finds himself in false relations, from which he can hardly extricate himself at any given time without dissimulation or unkindness. But there is nothing to be feared from rela-

tions formed upon the basis of reality and sincerity. If we seek only those to whom we mean to speak and act as we are in our heart of hearts, and if, by being always true to ourselves, we draw around us only such as value us for what we are, and nothing else, there might be truth between man and man. But because we are always exhibiting dainties of manner, and look, and speech, and saying to all, "Eat and drink," when it may be that we inwardly loathe the dainties, and wonder that any are attracted by them; because of this we are untrue to ourselves, and we disappoint others. We are just what we *are at heart*, and we shall fail sooner or later in every thing which depends upon any thing else in us. It is never hard to give of ourselves; our personal influence, our genius, that goes out from us as light from the sun, and hence we shall always be true to and never disappoint those who meet us on that plane of expectation; but alas for one who must always create some dainty foreign to his tastes, to satisfy the craving of foreign natures! Truthfulness becomes very difficult to such persons. It throws virtue into the market at a price almost too high for human nature to pay. How much better that we should be clothed with social relations which will admit of the largest and freest movement, and which will enable us to surprise by unpromised resources rather than disappoint by promised supplies, which we can furnish only by promise. But good as are these suggestions of this text upon the duty of complete honesty in social intercourse, it is for a widely different purpose that I have selected it. I use it now as the illustration of a spirit-law of action and reaction between the thought of the heart or the reality of character and its environment of circumstances and opportunity. We *are* what we think in our hearts, as we *are* what we most

profoundly love. Herein lies our hope and our security—that we are not transformed into all the eccentricities of the intellect, that we are not limited in our growth to its limitations; but we grow into, we literally become, *the thought of the heart.* The heart absorbs something for its nutrition out of all that occupies the mind, and even from the niggard hands of falsehood wrings its needful food of truth.

A thought may occupy the intellect, and yet not be taken into the heart, conscience, will, so as to essentially affect the life. This seems at first a pure misfortune, but it is not always so; it is the heart's security against false teachers. Alas for us, if it were not possible for the mind to assent to one thing while the heart believes another and better! Only a small part of the food taken into the stomach is nutritious, or adds any thing to support existence. It is only a subtler secretion which finds that of which blood is made and the fire of life kept burning; yet the innutritious is as essential to health, and to life even, as the nutritious food. No person could live for a week if fed upon purely nutrient food. There is much such a process going on between the moral and intellectual life. But a small amount of that which we take into the mind is absorbed into the circulation of affection to become a part of life. We think a great many things; the heart finds and needs but few, but these few it will have. And it would be difficult to show that the innutritious thought was not as essential to life in the end as the nutritious. It is doubtful if, at present, we could exist upon pure, absolute truth; for "no man can look on God and live." And yet we must ever strive after this same impossible thing; for only in seeking the absolute truth are we able to find the true. When we look back upon the history of our own minds, we are tempted to smile at the

changes through which we have passed, the nothings which at various times have occupied the field of our mental vision as if they were all. We think in astonishment of the earnestness with which we have clung to one and another theory, as if our own and society's existence depended upon it. We need not smile; we need not wonder; much less need we be ashamed or discouraged. In every earnest grasp of the mind upon what seemed to it true and permanent, the heart found what it longed for. We did not become like that transient error for which we were battling; we became more and more like the thought of the heart, which was of pure truth and which loved the error not for its sake, but supposing it to be true. It was for that we aspired and prayed; and even though from this time we see clearly that we then saw through a glass darkly, the heart drew nutrition of immortal life from that partial attainment. Do you think that Paul was really the worse for having believed in his heart that he verily ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth? Was he not the better Christian for having been so good a Jew? In that perfect devotion to what he thought was right and true, was he not becoming more and more like perfect rightness and truth? I think so. Indeed, when we think in what error (as later times have proved it) so many good and true men have lived and died, and accomplished a noble life-work, we must see that an earnest heart finds communion with the Infinite, even when the intellect mistakes some Gorgon dogma for absolute truth—mistakes the ugly and ill-shapen door of the sheepfold for the great pasture where the soul finds springing grass and living water.

Surely, Fénelon, sweet and beautiful Fénelon, drew the sources of his life from something better and purer than the

Catholic dogma of the seventeenth century. He does not seem to us like his mind; we always think of him as being like the thought of his heart, which, as a light from some inner glory, struck through all obscurity and partiality of his thought. We think of John Tauler, not as the thinker of this or that theory, the advocate of one or another monkish discipline; he seems to us to belong to no church nor order, a partisan of no special theory, but the pure, mystic soul, bathed in the light of other suns than those which lit the outer eye of his dark age.

The same is true of all saintly men and women of the past or present. They were and are in reality, not like their doctrines of election, and retribution, and atonement, but like the better thing which they loved, namely, reconciliation with God and a life in harmony with the Infinite life. A bee will suck honey even from dead and decaying vegetation; still, that is no reason why it should leave the full-blown clover-field or garden of roses, where fresh honey hangs in flower-cups, to prowl for the mite still left in garbage. Nor does it follow, because living hearts have absorbed some drops of pure love from the large mass of dogmas in which the mind of the past has struggled for light, that *we* should turn away from the fountain of truth opened to-day in every true soul as fresh as the honey of new-blown roses, to find the mites of truth left here and there in the rubbish of the past. The relation of dogma to the life is the question of more or less nutrition. The less nutriment there is in dogmas, the more must the heart have, and *vice versâ;* but the souls of men have always been fed by the same food—communion with the Infinite—and have become like that which they loved and sought for, however it may have been named.

A sincere man, who says he worships Christ, worships in reality his highest thought of the good and the true; and we do the same, but we call the object of our worship God. Therefore it is that such men are often surprised by the charges which theological opponents make concerning the effects of their creed. They are conscious of no such effects. They are not looking at the creed, but through it at the deep sky. George Herbert says,

> "A man who looks on glass,
> On *it* may stay his eye;
> Or, if he chooses, through it pass,
> And so the heavens espy."

Some dogmas are more transparent than others, as some kinds of glass are clearer than other kinds, and the mind is ever striving for the clearest dogma; but it is obvious that in any case it is not the dogma itself which the heart loves, though it may think so, as a child thinks the landscape is actually painted on the window-pane. It is that to which the dogma opens the way which the heart loves, and it becomes like *that* in proportion as it is true and earnest. So, friends, we need not despair of possessing the kingdom of heaven because we pass through so many changes in thought and speculation; we need not despair of others because they differ so widely from us in the form of their creed. If we seek the highest and the best, and strive for these, we shall become like them.

The longing to be so helps to make the soul immortal. Now, when the heart-love is fixed and crystallized in habit, when the inmost character is determined in prevailing affections, thoughts, deeds, then there begins at once a law of action and reaction between this reality that we are and its

environments—a law of attraction and repulsion, which almost compels us to become like that thought of our hearts. First it moulds the body to an expression of itself, until one begins to look, speak, act like his inmost love. The eye, the lip, the nose, the forehead, even the step and unconscious manner, are all under its subtle control. It strikes through all possible affectations of artificial manners, and will out—this central nobility, or the lack of it. When the love of the heart is true and pure, no ugliness of feature or form can conceal its beauty; but we straightway think that even deformity is handsome if it is illuminated by a bright and handsome spirit. I have some faith in Swedenborg's idea that spirits in another world may be known at once by their appearance; that the spiritual body, being so much more plastic, and yielding so much more easily to the formative power of the spirit, will exactly express the nature of the spirit; thus we may know and be known by the spiritual body, as we know the quality of a tree by its outward form. However this may be, the tendency of this body to become like the thought of the heart is obvious to every careful observer.

Nature and destiny are honest, and never fail to leave their mark—to hang out a sign for vice and virtue, and for every quality. Men spend money indefinitely to cover over a few inches of baldness, and heed not that nature has published some unworthy love of the heart in black and white on the whole body; but it is all in vain. Nobility and deformity are not wholly matters of the books, to be learned by rote in the Guide to Good Behavior; they are of the heart, and will declare themselves. It is sad to see one with an inward love which is unworthy of him trying to hide it from his children or his friends. It is sad also to see one

who is conscious of true nobility repining because it gets no expression in a handsome or noble form and manner; neither need doubt for a moment that both will certainly be published. Men said of Burke, "We can not stand under the same archway with him in a shower of rain without finding him out."

> "All things carry the heart's messages,
> And know it not, nor doth the heart well know;
> But nature hath her will—even as the bees,
> Blithe go-betweens, fly singing to and fro
> With the fruit-bearing pollen."

Not only is it true that as we think in our hearts, so are we; but it is also true that as we think in our hearts, so is it with us. The moment we declare permanently in favor of this or that quality, that moment do others come around us and demand it, and hold us responsible for it. From the lowest to the highest quality of character does this hold true. Has a man chosen coarseness? His choice seems at once to embody itself in his companions, who become a fate and fury to him. They meet him on that plane; they expect it of him; he knows they do, and gives it, until at last he believes others as coarse as himself, and the world presents its coarsest features to him. I once knew a man who was famous for his profanity. At first it was only a passionate outburst, for which he was hardly responsible. But soon he drew around him those who laughed at his profanity, and were disappointed if they did not hear it; he yielded, and thus by a natural reciprocal action of this law, he soon became unbearable to sensitive minds, and was left in his own hell. I knew a young woman who, in the joyousness of healthy life, won the reputation of being gay and frivolous. It really was not the most essential part of her

character, although it seemed so; but she drew around her those who expected her to be gay and frivolous, and never any thing else. Persons who were sensible at other times were silly with her, because they took her to be such in her heart, until it seemed as if the poor girl was doomed to become like this environment of frivolity. A stern discipline of sorrow saved her by setting free a better and truer thought of her heart. How many a man becomes permanently fixed in habits of indulgence in the same way! Before he is aware of it, his indulgence, at first casual, gets organized into a fate of good fellows who almost force him to his ruin. Oh! how dreadful is this inevitable tendency of the sinner to become like his heart-thoughts. Ask yourself, before you cherish a thought or an aspiration, Am I willing to become like this purpose—am I willing to have it published in my eye, my voice, my speech, and all I do or say? Am I willing to see it living all about me in the persons of those who seek it of me and compel me to give it? There is something startling in the ease and certainty with which a man is given over to the hardness and blindness of his own heart, and allowed to believe a lie. Paul described this effect in Thessalonians when he said, "Because they received not the love of the truth, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they might be damned who believed not the truth."

The worst effect of having any thing to do with untruth, even of trifling with it for policy's sake, is that before we are aware we get to believe it. How steadily have the South, for party purposes, passed from apology for slavery to a belief in and love of it? Therein is their torment; that is the worst possible thing which could happen to them. And yet men say because they are sincere they must be

right. When the madness of men passes into sincerity, there is nothing left the gods but to destroy them. That is the most fearful consequence of an unholy love, that we are transformed into it.

This man is resolved to find faults in his neighbor. He will find what he seeks; we all do. He will note and remember only his faults, which for a time are balanced by a certain amount of good which he believes his neighbor possesses; but by and by he gets to believe in the faults only, and then he can see no good; then every man who knows any evil of the neighbor will add it to his stock of evidence, and at last he is completely given over to believe a lie. Or one thinks meanly of mankind; he notes evidence of human folly; others will fill his ears and eyes with the same facts and illustrations, and at last he believes meanly of man, and in his own person adds another illustration of it.

And then, advancing but a step further, the same law which makes the body, and the society, and the circumstances of a man like his heart-thought, will give its own hue to all the fair creation, and all things are repetitions of this inner madness.

But now see how beautiful is the help of this law to one who loves God and truth, and who strives to fix the heart upon holiness. The body becomes beautiful by that love. It shows itself in all that pertains to the personal life. The eye, the voice, the lips, the emotions, all have something about them which seems to say the inner life is holy. Underneath all external gayety or frivolity you see the same clear light; omissions of duty or occasional transgressions are at once repudiated by the nobler meaning of the whole body, and you feel that the heart is essentially true to a

lofty purpose. No deformity or lack of culture can conceal the essential sweetness and charm of the spirit. Then how quickly this love of the heart becomes woven into a beautiful fortune of environments.

Those who have a like love will find out such a one, and come to him and expect him to show his fairest side, and be disappointed if he does not. Some one said to Emerson, "When you enter the room, I straightway think how I shall make humanity appear beautiful to you." How can such help but think nobly of man? All that is hopeful even in sinful souls comes out to sun itself in their presence. Fair hopes and good resolves and brighter aspirations start up at their approach as flowers in the footsteps of Spring. If I heard of a marked instance of real worth under a rough garb of external manners and uncouth ways, I would take pains to tell it to Freeman Clarke, because I know he loves to hope noble things of rough and even of wicked men. Hundreds would do the same. Thus all things become tributary to this grand love of the heart. It gets embodied in the lives of others, and it becomes a heavenly atmosphere in which heavenly things are luminous, and attract the eye and encourage the heart. I was once reading the story of the transfiguration to a dying girl; she said in a bright, penetrating way, "How strange! The disciples must have dreamed it; for it says they were asleep!" I wrote at once to Dr. Furness, and gave him an account of it, because I knew that such was his theory, and thought that this would confirm his own intuition. And so it proved. Starr King loved, passionately loved, the White Hills. I heard his friends propose to send them on canvas to him in his distant home—a gift of friendship and a tribute also to a true lover of God; so that this joy of his

heart might also become a part of the outward symbols of this inner blessedness, and keep it ever alive. I name these instances only to show how sure is the working of this law, by which a man becomes more and more like the thought of his heart.

And how earnestly does every view of the case plead with us to love the highest and best—God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves. How small do other successes appear beside this of a pure heart which sees God? How easily we may see all else fade and die if we have found that wonderful charm which calls into being an environment of pure, loving, hopeful souls, and makes heaven wherever it goes. If there is any beauty in life, such will find it. If there is any goodness, such will meet it. If there is any truth, such will possess it. They may pass through many changes; what seems to them rock to-day may prove sand to-morrow; but they will grow through all changes into nearer likeness to that which they seek.

O friends! choose ye this day, I entreat you, that thought of the heart into which you are willing to grow; which you would wear on your foreheads; which you would write in your friendships; which you would hope and believe of man; which you would exalt to the infinite and call your Father in heaven; yea, which you would see rise into a mansion not built with hands, eternal in the heavens, the everlasting home of your souls.

IV.

THE PROMISES OF GOD.

"It was impossible for God to lie."—Heb. 6 : 18.

This text fixes a limit to the activities of God. The schoolmen said that the Deity could do all things. This man says that there is at least one thing that even he can not do—he can not lie. It means simply that God can not be and not be at the same time. An infinite being who could lie would not be God; for lying implies contradiction, and that implies finiteness. This text is important, because it is a bold judgment of a finite being passed upon an infinite being. Think how bold it was. Think what is implied in such a judgment. How could this man know what God can not do? He had not considered the infinite attributes; he did not know from personal experiment what the divine being is capable of; he had not entered into the treasury of his thought, nor measured all his ways. He had no system of empiricism which piled fact upon fact until he could climb upon it to the height of the possibilities of God. How then could he pronounce this universal negative and fix this positive limit to infinite power?

He had just one standard of judgment, and that belonged to him as a man, and not as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews: it was the witness of God in every heart; the conviction born in men that God is all perfection, and

that perfection is consistent with itself; that all diversity resulting from this consistency has its unity, all discord its harmony, all falsehood its truth, and all wrong its right. This Hebrew writer, looking out upon the creation through windows which the Creator had opened in his soul, saw that the true object of this inner religious want could not lie; he knew that the best hopes of pure souls must in some deep way run side by side with the whole plan of creation.

Many things are implied in this judgment which have important bearings upon our life-problem. It implies, first of all, the capacity in man to judge not only of Bible, and creed, and church, and ritual, but of God. It implies a capacity of submitting all things to the test of this inner witness. It warrants us in saying that the book, the creed, the church, the form that attributes to God what is contradictory, discordant, untrue to the human ideal, is a lie.

It implies, further, that the inner life is the great reality, and by it the reality of all other things must be tested; that nothing can be so certain to a man as his inner life of emotion, thought, resolution, intuition. That which is external to himself becomes reality to him only as it harmonizes with that which is internal. It is not matter which gives reality to spirit, not the material object which verifies the spiritual subject, but the spirit—or the life of man—goes on affirming forever that the laws which are stamped on the soul are laws which exist everywhere, and if any thing exists by other laws than these, it can not be known by man. The inner craving is the only door which opens outward upon the object of its hunger.

It is true that man is weak and feeble, yet in all his weakness he will affirm that what is not beautiful to him is

not beautiful in God; what is not true to him is not true with God; what is not right to him is not right in God. He may, indeed, admit the existence and reality of a truth, a beauty, and a right which transcend his present capacity as far as the east is from the west; but he will not admit that truth in its highest significance, nor right in its largest relations, nor beauty in its most splendid manifestations, can contradict even his limited ideas of truth, right, and beauty. We may readily believe in a mathematical result which transcends our present power of testing; but when you tell the human soul of a God whom it can not comprehend because his love is greater even than that of earthly parents for their children; whose mercy sendeth sun and rain upon the good and the bad; whose discipline prepares, through trial and tears, things which eye hath not seen, nor the heart of man conceived; when you say this to the soul, it receives it with faith and joy, even though it can not comprehend it. It seems reasonable. It seems but an extension of those ways of God which he can trace in his own heart, mind, conscience, soul. It seems consistent with that perfectness which he longs, aspires, and prays for. It seems the completion of the circle of whose majestic sweep his own being marks a few degrees.

But when you tell any one who is not made dumb by superstition, of a being whose greatness is not seen in the completion of, but in the opposition to, our nature; whose ways are not our ways, because they *contradict* our life; who loves us more than earthly parents love their children by doing for us what every earthly parent would deem it cruel to do for a child; whose discipline is so mysterious that, instead of making generations bend and break that it may draw all souls unto itself, it tears and dismembers them that

it may forever torment the wicked; when you tell such a soul of such a God, it must answer as this fearless Hebrew did—God can not lie.

In times like these, one loves to get near some such certainty as this. One loves to penetrate as closely as possible to the essential unity through all the surface-strata of diversity. When the air is so thick with falsehood; when men rise to responsibility by lying, and the whole discipline of the hour seems to contradict the hope of the age, we love to hear that He who controls the hour and the age, the soul and its discipline, can not fail in the least nor in the greatest. We feel the need of finding a focus where these discordant tones make harmony; we seek some perspective extensive enough to group the straggling figures in this battle-scene as they must be pictured to the eye of God. There must be some issue to the blood, and sweat, and groan, and heart-breaking of this time, so great, so eternal, that this is not worthy to be compared with that, else God could not be happy. Do you ever think of this—how much nearer the sorrows and aspirations of the age are to his heart than to ours? To us it seems dreadful that there should be such a cruel war in such a fair land, that there should be so much success of wicked and bad men, so much misery and suffering in a world so capable of being all that the soul craves for an earth-home. But there can not be a dark side, not a possible depression of hope, which has not been already seen and thought of by infinite love and justice and care. These things which are now transpiring have not been sprung upon the Creator unawares, or in spite of his will. This present disorder is not a mere dance of death in a world which God has vacated—chaos come back again to reclaim a work whose creator, when he

saw it, pronounced it very good. Let us not forget, in any season of despondency, how impossible it is God's works should fail—that the promise of peace on earth and good-will among men should not be sooner or later fulfilled. Let us not forget that the same Being who made the soul's sorrow and aspiration controls its discipline and its destiny. Let us not forget that He who gave us fathers and mothers and the love of home and family, and the love of beauty and order; the same Being who made the earth to yield her increase, and hung the heavens over it, and filled them with stars; who made sunrise and sunset, clouds and flowers, and every sweet harmonious thing, rules at this hour as he did at the first and will at the last; and he can not lie. He can not contradict the witness of himself which he put into our hearts to testify of him. O friends! I love to look up out of this hot trial, this scalding heat of war, into the pure spaces of God's fidelity, and feel the cool tranquillity of his consistency with himself and us. Here is comfort. Our feeble lives, how small they are in this great frame of things! I love to feel that they are links in a chain which can not be broken; that they are not separate grains in a chance-rope of sand, but separate sinews in the everlasting arms which encircle all events. For, feeble as our lives are, how magnificent are their aspirations, and how far-reaching their sympathies! My friend, why are you heart-broken at the rage of wicked men? Why do you feel that you would rather die than outlive the glory and the honor of your country? Why need it disturb your sleep, or abate your enjoyment, or dull your appetite, because a great, free, happy people seem ready to enter into a league against the poor, the friendless, down-trodden slave? Why do you feel ashamed and blush to call yourself a man when you

see what corrupt and wicked men are doing to destroy our country, as if all sense of shame or desire of goodness had died out of them? Or why do you go still further than this in your sympathies? Why do you shudder at the downfall of Poland, the oppression of Hungary, the sufferings of Ireland, the cruelty of England? These things may never affect you personally. You may put your arms about your loved ones and hold them back from the peril of war. You may shut your heart to the cry of your country, the appeal of the widow and fatherless, the groan of the wounded and dying. You may scorn the slave, you may strike hands with his oppressor, you may consent to have his wife stolen, his children sold and his heart broken. You need not die over and over again with every triumph of the power of darkness. You may retire to a security of indifference, where you trade and get rich, and eat and sleep and die like a dog if you will. Then why this sighing and praying and weeping and struggling for something better—for a free country, for an enfranchised people, for a nation of men capable of heroism, self-control, and self-forgetfulness? Why have you still before you that vision which has proved a will-o'-the-wisp to so many martyrs and patriots and prophets of all ages? Why will you feed a fire whose burning consumes your own soul while it sheds light and warmth upon others?

It is because you know that God can not lie. The very idea that he can do so, even in the remotest parts of the world, seems an insult to the God in you, and you are roused in spite of yourself to protest against it. He has written a great promise on our hearts, and we can not help seeking its fulfillment everywhere. Our only chance of inheriting manhood and immortality depends upon our fidelity to

the truth of God of which our soul is a witness. Give up this struggle, and we become brutes. Exchange its sweat, and tears, and sighs, and battle-strokes for ease, comfort, and prosperity, and you give your soul in exchange for the world.

Oh! there is something sublime in this tearful, tragic assertion of the right of a created being to feel that its Creator is true, and this protest to the death that all which conflicts with this feeling is false; this right of a created being to find something outside itself answering to its inner life. The old theologies are full of essays to prove that a created being has *no* rights, any more than clay in the hand of the potter. To say so is simply monstrous. We had no choice of being. We were not asked whether or not we would take our chances of ultimate success in such a world as this. We were not asked if we were willing our bodies should be frozen by its cold or smitten by its heat, starved by its famine or pampered by its plenty, afflicted by its pains or consumed by its passions. We were not asked if we would have our minds darkened by this world's error or dazzled by its truth; our consciences hardened by its sins or confounded by its wrongs; our hearts intoxicated by its joys or broken by its woes. We were never asked if we were willing to love our country while we were compelled to see her dishonored; if we were willing to love liberty, and be compelled to see her beacon-lights blown out in every watch-tower along the coast of history; if we were willing to love freedom, and yet to see it taken from the black man by the rich, and the happy, and the prosperous, the powerful of earth. We were not asked if we were willing to have souls that would raise us in capacity of joy and sorrow above the brutes, and whose life must be fed by spiritual things which are so deeply buried beneath passion, and pride, and self-

interest, that nothing but affliction can unearth them for us.

If then, without being asked, all these necessities were laid upon us, we must have rights as created beings. We have a right to say that God can not lie. We have a right to believe that these highest necessities of the purest souls shall be satisfied. We have a right to believe that this longing for peace, and beauty, and righteousness, and justice, is not all a dream. We have a right to believe that God would not have compelled us to accept of existence unless he meant that that existence should prove a blessing to us; unless he meant that there should come a time when each created being will bless him for existence, and accept, from choice, what he gave without choice. We have a right to trust in him that made us, with all these heaven-piercing yearnings. He will not mock us. He has not created this soul-hunger for the purpose of laughing it to scorn, when it cries for something to eat. If we ask for bread, he will not give us a stone; if we ask a fish, he will not give us a serpent. And because earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, we have a right to believe that he who made earthly parents will give good things to them that ask him.

But they tell us man is so weak, and wicked, and miserable, that he does not *deserve* to be cared for by an Infinite Being! Is that the way we think of perfectness? Have you less or more care for your helpless, deformed child, because he is helpless? When is the tenderest appeal made to your most perfect helpfulness—when your baby lies in the cradle too weak to lift so much as a hand or an eye to you for assistance, or that babe when he has grown to be a man, and become your peer in all things? If ye, then, being evil, are

moved by every holy sentiment to help your child because he is helpless, how much more shall God help his feeble child whose weakness is embittered by his aspiration after that which strength alone can give! This sense of helpfulness in your nature is God's promise to you that his nature is the same, only freed from all inability to help; and God can not lie.

Here then, my friends, we may come back for the answer of the old wearying question. This is our comfort and our assurance: that these necessities of our souls are God's promises to them. They are the bridges which span the chasm between ourselves as subjects, and himself as the object. They are the windows through which we can look and find the ideal prospect for which we hunger. Do not doubt that every real necessity of your soul's life will be met by a corresponding helpfulness from God's life. The want may indeed be fictitious, and the supply dangerous: you must see to that. But those deepest wants, to which all others give way; those brightest hopes, before which all others grow pale; that enduring faith, which has lived through all ages, and over-reached all stretches of history, that can not fail, because God is true.

O patriot! sad and strong, loving your country, and willing to die for her, while you are compelled to see the enemies of God and man rise against her; you whose heart is on fire with the old hope of freedom and liberty, that hope which counts its martyrs by millions, and makes their graves the milestones of the world's growth, do not forget, even in the darkest hour, when all that you have longed for and worked for seems ready to sink, that God can not lie.

O human heart! sick of failure, discouraged at your

poor attainment, do you ask if there is rest for the weary? If God giveth to his beloved sleep? Do you ask, "If a man die, shall he live again?" and by what sign you may prophesy the fulfillment of the promise? You may know it by this: God made you so that you can not help longing for immortality. He has engraved the hope on the soul of the world. It has been the one unfading hope which has kept the heart of humanity from breaking; the one compensation to which martyrs have looked out of the flame, and heroes through the battle-smoke, and saints through the pain of life's fitful fever. God has made you to hope for immortality, and he can not lie.

O mourner! the world seems blank and sad to you. You have hardly the heart to make new friends, for sorrow that the old and tried ones have departed. You hesitate at each new step forward because it bears you further from some cherished grave. The familiar places are silent, and you miss something everywhere. It seems as if the early promise had failed, and your life, which once stood fair and round in its green foliage of friendships, is now stripped and bare as a winter tree sighing for the old summer that shall never return, and waiting for the new spring-time whose warmth is not yet felt. You say, "Are these old ties sundered forever? Is it only separation, or is it banishment that divides the family on earth from the family in heaven? Will these sundered heart-strings ever be bound together again, or must I look forward to a future life, where all is new and strange? Are the relations in which my life began—a love of father and mother, husband and wife, parent and child—are these the mould in which my type of being was cast, and the soil in which it is to grow forever?" My friend, your sorrow is the world's sorrow.

Your desire is the desire of humanity. The aspiration to meet, and know, and live with the loved ones who are gone before, is one which breathes out of the deepest heart of the race, and speaks from the better nature; and your hope is the old hope, the hope of all. God hath given the promise, and it is impossible that God should lie.

SELECTIONS FROM SERMONS.

I.

THE WAY OF LIFE.

THE life of Jesus is of priceless value as a result; both as a result of what had gone before, and as the resultant of a new spiritual force in conflict with the resistance of its environment. That such a person as Jesus was possible at that time marks a long stretch of progress from the beginning, as the appearance of man on the earth marks a long progress from the virginal chaos. His life was not a solitary event thrust into time from eternity, with no intermediate stages of development—as if the fauna or flora of the present earth had been raised by miracle upon the Silurian rocks—but it indicates a result of the past, a general warming and purifying and hardening of the globe in preparation for a higher and better type of life. The great mass of the Christian precepts and principles had already been embodied in other writings.

It is a great mistake to suppose that Christianity swept away all that had gone before, and planted in its stead an entirely new civilization. Before gospels or epistles had been put to paper, the results of the former development came from the east and west, the north and south, to recognize in this new life a fulfillment of the old hope. And the re-birth of art and revival of letters was in each case the result of new combinations between the Christian philanthropy and faith, and the contemporary heathen culture. The church fathers were as much indebted to Plato

and Aristotle for their doctrines as they were to Jesus for their triumphant lives. This imputes not the less but the more honor to Jesus. For if he was an unnatural being, raised up miraculously by the power of God to live and teach as he did, it is hard to see how any peculiar merit attaches to him. Had God done so for us, we might have done likewise. The wonder is, that this obscure man, untaught in the schools, living in an unheroic age, when there was every temptation to think meanly of man—that such a one should so live, by the purity of his heart and directness of his intuitions, as to give the best illustration of the destiny of man and the best interpretation of all that had preceded him, so that in him religions of race became religions of the world. This is the wonder and this the glory of Jesus.

And in like manner there is more hope and comfort in regarding Christianity as a result of the past, than as an abrupt and exceptional incursion of heaven upon the earth. It shows that the race has never been orphaned of God, but ever helped by him through prophets, teachers, redeemers; that there is no break in the thread of development; that the retrograde movements of an age or generation are like the backward swings of the pendulum, helpful of the ever-moving hand upon the dial.

Jesus's life was not like the flash of a meteor upon whose sudden light we can predicate nothing—no hope of light for the traveler nor heat for the grain—but rather like the rising of the sun, prophesied by darkness, heralded by twilight, the natural result of the fullness of time.

His life is priceless as the result of a human soul struggling with sin, and temptation, and error; bearing witness to the truth even unto death. That he saw so much to love

in common people; that he made common life appear so uncommon, even to publicans and sinners; that in the midst of stupidity, and hypocrisy, and treachery, he did not become soured and distrustful of man; that his peace came not from blindness, but from clearness of vision; that he could look through the transient event to the permanent providence; that his feeble life was made strong from sources so deep and solemn; that, with a woman's capacity for suffering, he suffered in agony to the end, still clinging to the truth, still loving God and the lilies, still trusting in his right and ability to lead the world. He saw, and suffered, and accomplished; and he speaks to you and to me in our pain and pleasure, our success and failure, of what he has tried and conquered. Such a result is priceless; such a life speaks to all lives; and belongs not to one man, nor one race nor age—it belongs to humanity.

But, friends, it is not as a result in either sense that the life of Jesus is of most value to the world; its real excellence is hinted at in the text, where he calls himself the *Way*. He is not the journey's end, but the strait gate and the narrow path; not the living pasture, but the door of the sheepfold; not the end, but the means; not the argument, but the method; not the Infinite and Absolute, but the way to the Father.

This is the crowning glory of Christianity—it is a way and not an end. It is a path which you and I may walk in, step by step, through forest shade and desert gloom, and city tumult, never doubting, even when the end is hidden, that all possible good which can come to us will be met sooner or later on that road. I do not say that Jesus began life with a conscious plan of revealing the only way by which men could find the Father; but by doing, thinking, feeling,

what was right as each occasion offered itself, he found at last the unvarying condition of all thought, feeling, action, which enables us to pass from the transient to the permanent, from the fact to the law, from the event to the providence, from the day to eternity, from earth to heaven, from the neighbor whom we have seen to God whom we have not seen. That is the way of life. This is the glory of Christianity, because the Father comes to us only as we seek him. The infinite can not be imported into our natures any more than the ocean can be imported into a hollow shell; but as we open our souls, it comes in and fills us to the extent of our capacity—no further. And how much capacity we have, depends upon how far we have traveled in the right way. As much as the mind has found of truth, the heart of love, the conscience of right, the soul of God, so far have we traveled in the way, truth, life which lead to the Father. Have you struggled up half the mountain-path? You command half the prospect. Have you reached the summit? It is all yours. And since this is the inevitable law of human growth; since no man can perform the journey of life for us, nor carry us to the Father, nor bring the Father to us, how priceless is the life of one who has found the right way, of a human brother who has struggled so far upward that he calls to the nineteenth, as to the first century, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest."

Now this, the preëminently blessed element of Christianity, is just the element which the church as an organization has steadily refused to accept. She has seized upon certain words and acts of Jesus, certain historical facts *about* him, and made them ends in themselves. She has not nightly pitched her

"moving tent
A day's march nearer home."

She has not hurried each traveler on after his swift forerunner; but, building her walls around his ancient camping-ground of a night, has set her sentinels to proclaim it the celestial city, where his and our journey ends. Thus we miss that which we most need in Jesus—an open way, a tendency, a condition of life. This may be owing in part to the difficulty of organizing any thing so subtile, so impatient of corporeal touch, as this wonderful way to the Father. We can fence in a field and obtain a title to it, and measure every inch of its surface, and say who shall and who shall not enter it; but it is impossible to encompass an endless highway, reaching from the weakness of man to the omnipotence of God, and make it the property of a sect. The most we can hope is, that we may fix our habitation beside it, that it may serve us, though it can not belong to us. That which God needs most of genius, (if we may speak of his needs,) is that it should prepare a way, open a door, set free a fountain, through which he may pour out somewhat of his truth and beauty upon man; or perhaps, better still, through which the soul may go to him and find him in higher truth and diviner beauty, through which it may go in and out and find pasture. All those who have been schoolmasters to the race were far greater blessings as ways than as ends. Socrates bequeathed nothing to the world that was comparable with his method. Of all else we know little. He has not learned the a, b, c of art, to whom the picture, the statue, the symphony, the cathedral, of the great masters, is not a way over which his soul flies quickly into the presence-chamber of the infinite beauty. Luther was a way in his best days. When he ceased to be a Protestant against the

wickedness of Rome; when he gave up the grand old cry, "The just shall live by faith," and became a Lutheran, and fought for his attainment as the end, the result beyond which no man could go, he was shorn of his peculiar strength, and ground like Samson in the Philistines' mill. Protestantism was a way of life by faith, and involved the right of each soul, without priest or church, to go to God in his own way. Lutheranism is only a mile-stone showing how far one man had traveled on that endless road. Millions have traveled on his way, but few have pitched their tents for permanent repose in his hostelry. Unitarianism is a way, and not an end. Dr. Channing consecrated himself soul and body, not to the defense of his results so much as to the assertion of the right of each soul to worship God in spirit and in truth as it would. And he will live as the representative of a tendency, the advocate of a method long after he is forgotten as a father of Unitarianism. What is the first thought which his magic name brings before you even now, at a remove of less than a quarter of a century from his day? Is it not of a pure and fearless soul seeking truth in the love of God and man, and pushing aside every creed or form which comes between him and the object of his search? The defender of a sect is an afterthought.

II.

ALL THINGS ARE YOURS.

How could Paul, that feeble, penniless man, matched against a world of prejudice and power—how could he make such a triumphant assurance as this to disciples poor and friendless as himself? How could he encourage them to forsake all and follow the truth on the strength of such an assurance? What was the nature of this possession? What was this claim to man, and wealth, and experience, and all time? It was clearly not the claim of property. They had no rights of monopoly over the earth and life. There were many men in Corinth who could have shown a thousand possessions to the Christian's one. Paul had learned to regard every thing as his which could serve him, and he teaches the Corinthians that the great secret of possession is to put the soul in such an attitude toward the world, and life and death, the present and future, that they shall serve it, and that this is the highest and best ownership. Just as a man who places his ship in the right relation toward the winds owns the winds. He could get no more nor better service from them if he owned them. The best uses of all things abide in that to which our title-deeds give us no possession. The mere fact that we can call a thing ours by the law of the land, is no proof that it is ours by the law of the spirit and of life. Indeed, we may be owned by the very things which we possess. I have seen persons build a great house and fill it with splendid furni-

ture and say, "That house is mine;" when in reality they and their whole family were slaves to the house. The house owned them. When the carpet said, "Shut the blinds, or I will fade," they would shut them and sit in unwholesome darkness. When the chairs said, "Cover us all up, or we will catch dust," they would cover them and lose all their beauty. And so it was ever. The house owned them. The most casual comer, who felt his higher nature ministered unto by all the beauty and comfort there, owned the house more than the owner. To possess any thing is to make that thing of service, and to possess it most truly is to make it yield the highest service. The only reason that we try to own a thing is that we may control its service, and thus better secure it. But the moment we fail to comprehend the true use of that which we own, or fail to secure its legitimate service, it ceases to be ours and it begins to possess us. A man may own a large library of beautiful books from which he is not able to derive any real service. He may have bought them to gratify his pride of possession; and he may have a hired servant who reads them in the garret after the labors of the day are over, to whom the books belong more truly than to the owner.

Now, this is clearly the true relation of each mind toward the world's great teachers. One never knows how to value them rightly until he has felt that his own personality is the most sacred thing which he possesses or can possess; and that teachers, no matter how great or good, are nothing but a mischief the moment they ignore his personality and take entire possession of him. Yet how many persons there are who are owned by men; who have no opinions except such as they receive from some favorite Paul, Apollos, or Cephas; who dress, and study, and plan, and recite

a creed, not by the law of their own peculiar life, but as some one else does. They are like those parasitic plants which have no roots of themselves, but fasten to trees which have roots. Now, the true use to be made of other people's opinions in church, or state, or society, is the use which a living tree makes of the elements. Because the tree has life of its own and a destiny of its own, it takes from the earth, the air, and the water that which helps its life. And, although each of the elements is mighty enough to exterminate the tree, yet, because it has life, it practically owns them all. There could be no possible advantage in the tree's owning the elements, for it gets all from them that makes them valuable to it. But when the tree dies, the moment it ceases to exercise the power of converting all things to its own uses, then all the elements which before served it unite to destroy it, until each gets back what it gave. So it is with a human soul. So long as a man is alive, and assimilates the social elements to his own nature, they all serve him, and make him better and stronger, or, what is the same thing, they belong to him. The opinions of others are his food; but, like all food, they can not become a part of his being until he has mastered them. Moses, David, Jesus, Paul, are not his masters, but his servants. So long as he is alive in mind, in heart, in conscience, he will assimilate from them elements of his own life, and will reject those which he can not assimilate, no matter who else can assimilate them. But the moment he becomes indifferent and dead in spirit, it will fare with him in the social world precisely as it does with the dead tree in the natural world; every social element, every church faction, and every state party will attack him and destroy the personal life which he had assimilated, and make him a dead tool.

Because true and entire life is the only condition of growth in the universe. It is the only condition of safe existence amid its tremendous forces.

What joy there is in this thought! How it unfetters the whole higher being! With what new interest do we go to the opinions of the past and the present the moment we feel that, whatever they were or are, they can not be so sacred as the great life-thought which they can produce in us. It was this *life* of Jesus, this power of living amid the social elements and possessing them, which Paul preached as the only essential thing, to which all things else would be duly added.

In like manner, he says, the living soul possesses the world—wealth, position, influence, and all things which minister to physical necessities or comforts.

There is a literal sense in which this is, in a measure, true. The industry, and honesty, and economy of money and time which a healthful Christianity inspires, are the best conditions of worldly success in the long run. It would be hard to show, from the experience of this country for the last ten years, that unchristian enterprise is more successful than Christian enterprise.

But Paul had no such thought as this in his mind when he told the poor Corinthian Christians that the world was theirs. He meant that to every spiritual purpose it belonged to them. Those who legally own the world can get from it nothing which they can carry out of it except mental, moral, religious discipline and development. What is wealth to a man whose mind, heart, conscience, soul, are not strengthened by it? When he dies, he can not carry it with him; he can only carry the amount of soul which it has helped him to acquire. When he goes to a world

where the only realities are spiritual things, his happiness will depend not at all upon the amount of money he possessed in this world, but upon his power of spiritual discernment. There he will stand in the presence of beauty: if his wealth has helped him to love beauty, then he has truly possessed the world. There he will be in the presence of truth: if his wealth has helped to love truth, then he has truly possessed the world. There he will live in the presence of infinite purity: if his earthly possessions have made him pure, and taught him to love purity, then his possessions have ministered unto him. But can you not imagine that many a man and woman who has lived in honorable poverty, and loved the beauty of the rich man's fields, worshiped in the shadows of his great forests, met God in the sunrise which dawns over his broad estates, and in the stars which keep their sacred watch every night over the rich and the poor, in the joys and sorrows which come to all; many a poor man and woman, who have learned purity in poverty and schooled themselves to find unenvious joy in the prosperity of the rich—can you not imagine that such persons may more truly possess the world than those who own it? They certainly do. In every respect it serves them. They conquer envy by living beside those who have greater abundance than they. Thus the possessions of others give them the pearl of great price—a thoroughly unenvious spirit. Does the world give its legal possessor more? They learn to live in contentment through faith that all is well, although it seems so ill to them. Can wealth give its possessor a greater gift? And when they die, they go to a spirit-world with the power of spiritual enjoyment, which shows that this world has truly served them. But bear in mind, this is not because poverty is in

itself virtuous or wealth in itself vicious. The poor as seldom own the world in this spiritual sense as the rich, and the temptations and dangers of poverty are ten to one greater than those of wealth. There is to both rich and poor attached the same condition of possession, stern and inflexible as gravitation. That condition is *life*, true, earnest, mysterious life—the life which enabled Jesus to say in the midst of violence, "My *peace* I give unto you;" that life which enabled Paul to say, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." It is possible for any person who has this life, this determination to make all things serve him, no matter in what soil of fortune he may be planted—it is possible for him to take possession of every element of divine providence.

In the same spiritual and beautiful sense do life and death belong to a living spirit. By life and death I mean the two great classes of experience that these words indicate, the one of joy, the other of sorrow. And there is nothing which marks a higher stage of development than the fact that a man owns his experience; that he will not be mastered by the excitements of pleasure, the allurements of success, the intoxication of prosperity, nor yet by the discouragements of loss, the anxieties of adversity, nor the pain and anguish of death. If you would know precisely the point where gratification lapses into excess, you may mark it by this: whenever pleasure makes you lose yourself, whenever habit cramps your freedom, whenever you begin to lose in the least degree full control of your experiences, you may know that innocence is past, and that wickedness has begun. There are few things more fearful than for a human being to surrender the control of his life-vessel on the verge of a Niagara of indulgence. Oh! beware of this.

No matter how constant is your success, nor how uniform your pleasure, keep your spirit above it; keep your will beyond its control, keep your eye on the spirit's destiny, and compel all pleasure and all success to serve you to that end.

But this power to control our experience is just as essential in adversity. How often do persons give themselves to sorrow; and the moment they do so, sorrow can no more help them than the rain can revive a withered branch. The sole moral object of adversity is to strengthen life; but if we surrender our life to adversity, then it will destroy us. Each great trial is the riddle of the Sphinx: if we solve it, we destroy it; if we do not, it devours us. If I crave one thing more than another, it is that sorrow may never master me. Yea, I would possess death itself. Whenever it comes, or in whatever form it comes, I would look it calmly in the face and say, "You are mine." Till the last pulse-beat I would watch the ebb of life, and say, "I still live; I am not yours—I will not be yours." Nothing is so painful as to see a dear friend passing beyond the reach of our help into the shadow of death, and yet imploring the help we can not give. O friends! cherish that life which will claim death as its own; which will claim it as a grand experience to which it is entitled. And then, wherever you die, or whenever, your friends may feel that you have but claimed your own bravely, cheerfully, triumphantly.

And, once more, to such a life belongs all time, and all the possibilities of time, whether in things present or in things to come. We may well say to ourselves, as we lament the want of time and opportunities for more generous culture; as we long to know the thoughts of the great and good of earth, and to see the treasures of beauty which the earth has in store for those that love them; we may well say,

"Have patience, O my soul! Make the things of this present hour—the men, the possessions, the experiences—make these yours, and then all things, present and to come, shall be yours." The soul, in its best moods, longs to linger about these things present, even when it shall live amid the things to come until it shall possess them. As we nestle closer to our mother nature, and see how affectionately she welcomes us and entertains us with ever-increasing beauty and truth, do we not say, "Oh! let me ever live with thee"? We could not ask for a heaven of greater happiness than that which should give us the time and the power to explore life's mysteries, to comprehend nature's miracles, to catch the transient beauty which comes and goes on cloud, and river, and flower, and transcribe them on our spirits, and make them a part of our being. Oh! there is enough to live for, in all these things present and things to come, to make us very real and earnest, and anxious to gather from men that which can make us better and stronger; from the world that which shall make us love God, and wonder at his works; from life and death the power to control our destiny; from the things which we now have, and the promise of those which are to come, faith, hope, and charity. Standing on the summit of such development, although we are poor, yet are we rich; although weak, we are strong; although destitute, we are not forsaken; though cast down, we are not destroyed; though dying, yet behold we live; for all things are ours.

III.

BEING BY DOING AND TRYING TO DO.

The best and surest power in every person is that which springs from what they are—from their essential nature. And because it does come from their nature, they can not get outside of it, to estimate or understand it. What we are in our essential natures we can not tell, since we can only estimate ourselves by our own thought; and hence there is at last that power of thought which estimates, left unestimated. And every person, when driven, in defense of his convictions, from his remotest inferences inward to his centre of certainty, is compelled to say, "It is so because it is so;" or, rather, "It is so because I am what I am." I have a given belief: the reason I give for it is some anterior belief; and the reason for that some other still anterior, and so on until at last we come to the end of the series—to some first belief, of which no proof can be given. Or, if we trace any given experience inward through the narrowing, concentric circles of certitude, we come finally to our first and deepest experience, which has no other to rest on. Hence there is a centre of nature in us all, about which our characters crystallize, from which our constant personal influence radiates, of which we must be unconscious except as others wonder at it or testify to its power. And yet it is this very power, which springs from our nature as easily as waters from a fall, and accomplishes results as easily as waters

carry mill-wheels in falling; it is this power, of which we think least because we know least, that constitutes our real worth and occasions our real usefulness. Our actual strength is hidden in unconsciousness, beyond the reach of pride or the most morbid self-inspection. Through the alchemy of experience the special things for which we strive are transmuted into the gold of reality, and are buried in the foundations of our life. And only as our special efforts and impulses become fixed habits of activity do they become a part of ourselves—do they become ourselves. But then, when they have become habits, they no longer surprise us, they no longer satisfy our aspiration, because we know and think nothing further of them. So long as we can do a given thing only occasionally in choice moods and favorable circumstances, we take pride in it; we ask others to see us do it; we expect them to wonder at it when done. Yet so long as the doing of it is thus occasional, it is uncertain, and not a part of our own nature, upon which God and man can rely for permanent results. But by and by, through constant repetition, it becomes a habit, and then we think nothing of it; then we count upon it as a part of our reliable resources, and straightway use it for practical purposes, and begin to strive for some new thing which is difficult and almost impossible.

When the pianist begins his practice, he is glad if he can play passages of eighth, sixteenth, or thirty-second notes; but eventually he will run a sweet stream of chromatics across eight octaves, and trill half a thousand quavers a minute, and yet think no more of it than a scholar thinks of the alphabet while reading Shakespeare or Milton. This capacity of the pianist becomes not only second nature, but *nature* to him; and while we marvel at the rapidity of his

execution, he marvels that we think it wonderful. And so it is through the entire range of our capacities. It is what we are that tells permanently on others; and it is striving to be what we are not, which makes us what we are. We are at this moment the sum of our habits. The true response of man's nature to God's fidelity is habit. The legitimate result of law acting on free-will is *habitual* obedience. But we are made so that we can not find satisfaction in what we are; we are not conscious of its worth, it seems so natural; we are satisfied only by becoming something more; we get a knowledge of our present attainment only as we try its capacity for new attainment. A merchant knows little of his real power by the routine of business which has become nature to him. Only when he measures himself by some new enterprise, some enlarged endeavor, does he get an idea of what he is and what he can do.

Oh! how wonderful is this power of the soul to absorb and appropriate through experience the highest possible developments, and to transform them into the nerve and fibre of our being—to sink them in the foundations of still higher growth. Consider how blank is the mind and soul of each babe! Weaker in muscle and more helpless in instinct than the young of animals, it knows not that it hears with the ear, or sees with the eye, or smells with the nose; conscious only of varied impressions, received it knows not how nor whence. But from birth there begins this experience, repeated over and over thousands, millions of times, until it acquires habits of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, feeling, willing, loving, aspiring, which become henceforth his own nature, and can not be taken away from him. And where or when this process shall end God only knows. For consider how quickly we take the

greatest wonders into our daily habits, and look around for new wonders. Once we wondered that cars could be drawn by steam; now we wonder if they are not drawn forty miles an hour. That miracle of steam-power is now as common as the muscle of our arms; and we accept it as a matter of course, in our use of time and our responsibility for it.

We pledge ourselves to do a given deed in Chicago two days hence; we get into a car which is almost like a sitting-room for comfort; we are hurled over mountain and plain, through swamp and prairie, as if it were the most natural thing that such wondrous powers should be tributary to a human soul.

We can not imagine any thing which, previous to the experiment, would seem more miraculous than the annihilation of time and space by the telegraph; and yet we now accept the telegraph as a natural increase of our responsibilities, which we are quite equal to. It is only a longer arm, a swifter foot, a more telescopic eye. And the same is true of all the great discoveries which have passed into habits of use and expectation.

Who can tell the wonders which serve us day and night, and which we regard as our rightful servants? Now, where is the end to the miracles which such a being will appropriate? To what worlds of light can you transport him, where he will not make his home? Give him the flight of an angel, it would soon become his habit, like the telegraph; give him the telescopic eye of the spirit, it would soon become his habitual range of vision; give him angelic powers of art, or the most marvelous ability to invent and produce, he would soon cease to wonder at them. Indeed, you can not imagine a heaven so miraculous that man's nature could

not appropriate it as his native home. Any possible wonders would eventually become like the familiar scenes and means of his daily life, and his soul would strive for more and better. Hence we see an endless growth stretched before the soul, in which it will always strive for special ends, and will yet be valued and loved not for these, but for that which has passed into habit, nature, power.

Now, this should teach us never to despair of success. In many special things we fail, but in this of experience never. We value life as it helps or hinders this or that cherished plan; its real value may consist in something widely different. We estimate our power as it enables us to do this thing to-day and that to-morrow; but God may be using us for some purpose of which we little dream. The trying to do certain things and to fix matters as we want them, gives us a certain amount of habit, and that is what we are, and that is what God uses, for it can be relied on; from what we are goes out our best and surest power. Moses thought his life a failure because he could not go over the Jordan into the promised land; but his life was a grand success, compared with which the going into Palestine was a small matter. But hoping and striving to do that thing developed his habits of patience, and endurance, and toil, and thought, which were the real blessings to his people. He thought little of these; but God thought much of them, and history has treasured them up. Jesus thought himself sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but when they would not hear him nor come to his fold, he told his disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature. Yet it was the striving for that special thing which occasioned all his life and teaching; and these the world values most, although he

could not understand why one should marvel at any thing so natural.

Paul in the same way sought to preach the Gospel to the Jews; and it was only when the Jews refused to hear him, only when he failed, as he thought, in his most precious purpose, that his real work began of carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Well, so it always is. We set our hearts upon the doing of certain special things; we can not help that; but in struggling toward them, we send off our best and truest power for other uses. When the horse in the treadmill starts forward, and doubtless feels that he is moving forward, he stands still so far as his purpose is concerned, yet sets in motion the machinery which serves a higher race of beings. Could he reason, at the close of the day he might say, "The day has been a tiresome failure; I stand where I stood this morning;" because he dreams not that he has sawed the wood which warms and cooks for a whole household. The honey-bee flies all day from flower to flower, from field to field, and often feels no doubt at night-fall that the day has proved a bad failure because he found so little honey. He knows not that he has been bearing through all his weary flights the pollen which fructifies seed and fruit. The getting of a little honey is a small matter compared with the fruitage of orchards which he has secured. The silk-worm eats and weaves his web and values his life for the pleasure it gives him. How little he knows of his transcendent value to a higher race! The carrier-dove seeks its home and nothing more, little heeding that its power of flight and its instinct of place are performing the highest offices of love for man and maiden. And thus it runs through all nature, that the incidental power that goes out from what men and

things *are* is the best and most helpful of all power. The landscape upon which I look from my window, now clothed in the coronation-robes of autumn, how divine it is! It seems to have been made for the inspiration it gives me. But how is it? Every object there lives not for me, not for its own beauty, but for a direct selfish purpose. That maple-tree, blazing with crimson fire, has lived so far for the sake of producing its fruit. But see what have been its other uses, of which it took no thought. It has made so much wood for fire, for furniture, for ornament; innumerable birds have lived and sung all summer in its leafy boughs, millions of bees have sucked honey from its exuding sap; winds have harped in its leaves and gathered life from its sweet breath; weary cattle have lain in its shade; its form has delighted every passer-by; and now that its summer children are to die, it puts on its brightest holiday attire in token of gratitude for such a season of union and love.

Thus the tree, impelled by its habit to seek one end, in seeking that has unconsciously preached all summer its great gospel of beauty and use. It is thus with us all. Like the horse in the treadmill, we pace the weary round of our accustomed work—week, month, year, in and out—and seem at its close just where we were at the beginning. We may have a few more dollars; but even these have lost their peculiar charm for us. We know not that this very treadmill life of ours, and of such as we, has been turning the machinery of God's providence to society; that all the moral, social, political blessings of agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and arts are thus created and bestowed upon men.

Like the honey-bee, we hasten from one enterprise to another; from one hope of finding rest and peace to another, and return, oh! how often, feeling that it is all a

failure. It is of small consequence that we have failed to gather the honey of satisfaction for ourselves; it is a small gain compared with the pollen of help, and cheer, and inspiration which we may have borne to one waiting soul after another, which we were not seeking nor expecting to bless.

Like the carrier-dove, we long, aspire, and pray for the spirit's home of ideal life, and truth, and beauty; we strive for it, and plume our flight to reach it. There is too much power in this flight and striving to be wasted on any single purpose of ours; so God secretes his message of mercy, charity, and love in our unconscious nature, a blessing to the poor, and sick, and friendless all along our way. And while we shall expect God's approbation for having achieved so daring a flight, we shall be surprised when we learn that it was only the incidental work which we did, without prizing it, almost without knowing it—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick—which made our lives Christ-like. Such are the subtle ties which unite us each to all and all to each, that no one's life is or can be useless. Yea, it is this, the treadmill-work of each in his place, which secures all permanent blessings. There is no failure, there can be none. We must insist upon doing impossible things, because in trying those we entice our habitual strength out of its routine, and we get some idea of it; but it is surest and best in habit of which we think and know little. Raphael is ambitious to write a poem, Dante to paint a picture, Goethe to dethrone Newton, and we to sit down at the right hand or at the left in the kingdom of heaven; but Raphael, Dante, Goethe, are known and loved only for their natural work, which they could not help doing; and we shall be known and loved most for quite other effects than those on which we pride ourselves. Oh! these thoughts of mutual

helpfulness ought to encourage you all, dear friends, to be faithful, and courageous, and cheerful in the lot and under the responsibilities where God has placed you. You can not live a true life one day without being a missionary. In some deep, sure way each right deed and purpose of ours is taken into God's plan of help and blessing for all.

"Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows on the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton tolling his bell at noon
Deems not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse and lists with delight
Whilst his files sweep around yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent;
All are needed by each one,
Nothing is fair or good alone."

IV.

BINDING AND LOOSING.

THERE is but one law at the centre of all things, and that law is the single thought of God out of which the universe sprung. And as God is love, it follows that the law is loving; and the putting one's self in harmony with that law is being loved of God and loving him. There is but one *system* of laws, everywhere. Love and hate, harmony and discord, heat and cold, light and darkness, are the same everywhere, because the universe is a unit and the expression of one thought. Now, the spirit of a little child, which, as I said, is the spirit of directness, simplicity, fearlessness, intuition, faith, is the spirit which puts the heart of man in such relation to goodness, the mind of man in such relation to truth, his conscience in such relation to right, and his soul in such relation toward God, that he finds this central law of harmony;

> "A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

It sets the sails of his life-ship so that all winds speed its course. It builds the habitation of his personal being beside the river whose streams make glad the city of God. What is bound in this spirit is bound in heaven, and what is loosed in this spirit is loosed in heaven, because the same law pre-

vails in heaven as on earth. It followed as a matter of course that the disciples would build up an everlasting fellowship if they founded it upon the spirit. No man had any special power to administer a law which administers itself. Every man had the privilege of bringing his life into a line with that power which is of God and not of us. Therefore, said Jesus, he who would be greatest among you let him be the servant of all.

This chapter then (Matt. 18) is the statement of a spirit-law which it concerns us more to understand than any other. If I were asked what is the one great want in the sum of the world's knowledge, I should say it is the want of knowledge of law, physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. And if I were asked to say what was lacking in the ability of men, I should say the ability to conform to law. Of course I include in this the highest and most transcendent reciprocal activities of the finite and the infinite.

But you see how it is with all material development: the success of every people in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce depends upon their knowledge of law and their ability to bring their actions into harmony with it. God has extended his right hand to man in the elemental and dynamic forces which everywhere work with such constancy and order; and when man learns to trust this constancy and work in this order, he becomes a co-worker with God in nature, and what he binds on the earth is bound in heaven.

Take agriculture as an instance. Until the farmer has learned that the seasons succeed each other in regular order; that heat and cold, darkness and light, the early and the latter rain, however capricious in detail, are still constant to a law, his utmost strength is nothing but weakness. If he

sows his seed on any fine day, whether it be in spring, or summer, or autumn, he has no security of its growth; for he does not know whether heaven will work with him or against him. The very elements and forces which stand ready to sprout and grow his grain might, for aught he knows, enter into league to destroy it. But when he learns the laws of climate and of seed, and the relation of these to labor, then he is in harmony with the creation. Then the same elements which before were hostile become helpful. Then for him suns rise and set; for him lightnings gleam, and thunders roll, and dews fall. The winds are angels which blow the breath of life into his grass and corn. The sunbeams are his Raphaels and Titians, coloring the earth and heavens, to the pleasure of his eye. The storm-clouds dip their buckets in the sea and sprinkle his fields with the treasures of the rain. For what he binds on earth is bound in heaven.

The history of commerce is the same. So long as man had no knowledge of the law of the wind and the water, they were hostile to him. When he learned to bring his ability into harmony with theirs, navigation became possible; and from being barely possible, it has grown to be secure.

This principle needs no further illustration from material and practical life. You are acting upon it every day. You know that the everlasting faithfulness is pledged to support you when you seek it through law. That is the key which unlocks the infinite helpfulness. It is good because God is good. It is constant because God is faithful. It is inevitable because God is omnipotent. And in proportion as one realm of discord after another is entered and possessed by a knowledge of law, does the sphere of man's harmoni-

ous residence under the will of God extend. But the readiness with which God coöperates with man in agriculture, manufactures, and the useful arts, is not one whit abated in the realm of intellectual, moral, æsthetic, and religious life. There, too, there is no caprice, but everlasting fidelity. There no seed sown in the right soil shall fail of its fruit for lack of divine help. He that seeks for truth shall find it, if he seek not for gain, nor to be greatest in the kingdom, but only for truth. And when he has found truth, what is it but a law? And when he has found law, he has found God. And he may pledge all his wealth of life-hopes upon truth, and he shall not be bankrupt; for what is thus bound on earth is bound in heaven.

> "Truth only needs to be for once spoke out,
> And there's such music in her, such strange rhythm,
> As makes men's memories her joyous slaves,
> And clings around the soul, as the sky clings
> Round the mute earth, forever beautiful;
> And, if o'erclouded, only to burst forth
> More all-embracingly divine and clear.
> Get but the truth once uttered, and 'tis like
> A star new born, that drops into its place,
> And which, once circling in its placid round,
> Not all the tumult of the earth can shake."

That same perception has always passed before prophetic eyes, and it is true according to the law of our text.

Still more emphatically practical is the prevalence of this fact in all moral life. The perception of right is the knowledge of law. As truth is God's thinking, so right is God's working. It is the key which opens for us the armory of infinite resources. God does right; and all this system of life has its source in a purpose of right, is controlled by laws which help the right, and progresses toward the triumph of

the right. However we may fail to account for all the facts assumed in such a premise, or to supply all the links in the chain of such an inference, there can be no two ways about the conclusion. And hence it follows of necessity that in proportion as we do right we work with God, or rather he works with us and for us, just as he works for the farmer who sows his seed in the right soil and at the right time. And however the success of the right may be delayed through the partial perception of it by society, unless God can fail, the right can not fail. That which is bound in human relations by a perfect right is bound everywhere. And for the same reason that which is not thus bound, that which does not dovetail into the purposes of God, is necessarily loosed, and therefore destroyed. The passenger in a railroad-car, while he is bound to the car in the proper way, shares the motion of the train, and is helped on to his end; but if he once loose himself from that union with the moving body, he is at once destroyed. So one who goes on in the train of God's moral purposes, and binds himself to them through the right way, is carried along with them, and is sure to triumph with them; but if he dares to loose himself therefrom, then, sooner or later, he is hurled to his destruction.

But whoever would place his moral life in such harmonious relations with the purposes of God must not seek in the spirit of a place-hunter or fortune-seeker. He must not ask of God's anointed ones, "Who shall be greatest in this heavenly kingdom?" but, in the spirit of a child, with pure heart and open eyes, and wondering tone, let him ask, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?"

This is really what is meant when we say that we are happy only when we do right. Moral happiness shows

moral harmony. When the musician tunes his violin, he fixes one string at concert-pitch, and then tightens the others up through all the flats and sharps, and even through the lower harmonies, until they strike the right fifth below and above the key-note. The magnificent tone that it gives out when the strings are at the right tension, is the symbol to the master's quick ear that his fairy-shell is in tune and ready to strike out a perfect tone in answer to his nicest touch. So a soul passes through all the flats and sharps and lower harmonies of wrong-doing until it strikes the harmony of right, and then it rings in unison with the key-note of God's will, to which the morning stars sang together and in which all the sons of God do shout for joy. The happiness of goodness is the ring of the instrument in tune.

Let this be thy purpose, O friend! to observe the law of right and to do it. Then the sunshine and the storm, the night and the day, the heat and the cold of life's discipline will foster and mature the grain for garners in the sky. This is the great hope of a nation which puts itself on the side of right. It is then bound to the train of providential purposes and influences. This is the ground of my hope in the proclamation of freedom. It is simple obedience to a law, as much as sowing wheat in the spring. It is clasping the extended hand of God. It is putting ourselves in a condition to be ripened by all the moral and spiritual elements through winter or summer. If the seed does not blossom and fruiten a hundred fold, it will be either because it has fallen by the way-side of party prejudice; or on the stony places of selfishness, where there is no depth of earth; or among the thorns of office-seeking, which will spring up and choke it.

There is still a subtler relation of man to God in the laws of the spirit, through love, and prayer, and aspiration. It is possible through these spirit-graces to enter into perfect union with the infinite. This, too, is but the perception of, and obedience to, transcendent law. It is the spirit which unites the father and the child. Though the child in its weakness may not be able to take the father's right hand extended in power and in truth, it may meet him in love. The pure in heart will see God, for perfect love casteth out all fear. We quickly forgive a child who loves us dearly his mistakes in trying to understand our law, and his errors in trying to comprehend our thought. And God comes out to meet man even when he is a great way off, if his face is bright with love. Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he first loved us, as a mother loves her unborn child. Through affection, through love to our brother whom we have seen, through the love of beauty everywhere, we enter into secret fellowship with the "divinity which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will." It gives us a glance behind the curtain; we feel the pulsations of the central heart and enter into sympathy with the central law. We get near the living centre where the swift wheel of our mysterious fortune seems to stand still.

> "We become a living soul;
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things."

The great worth of Jesus' life to the world lies in this: it is a practical illustration of the way to live so that what we bind to our minds, our hearts, our souls, on the earth, shall be bound in heaven. He is a living witness to the way, the truth, and the life. And the great beauty of this law

is, that we may enter into perfect harmony with it anywhere in the smallest corner of life where present duty has planted us. The one practical lesson taught by this law is the duty of self-surrender; not in weakness but in strength; not waiting passively to be played upon by the infinite powers, but by bringing our entire energies into concord with them. Self-surrender is the practical duty wherein the two extremes of speculation meet—the fatalist from the one hand and the mystic from the other. The latter would feel his will swallowed up in infinite love. The former would feel his will lost in inevitable law. The difference is speculative and not practical. Law is God's working, and love is God's feeling. His love and labor are identical. So should our love and labor be. For then our feeble lives might so be bound to the infinite life that whatever they secured to themselves here would be secured everywhere.

O the everlasting faithfulness! how it works when we wake and when we sleep, when we weep and when we rejoice. We can not flee from its presence. We would not, but would hide ourselves in a cheerful self-surrender beneath its overshadowing wings, and live forever in its beautiful pavilion.

"Like warp and woof, all destinies
Are woven fast;
Linked in sympathy, like the keys
Of an organ vast.

Pluck one thread, and the web ye mar;
Break but one
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar
Through all will run."

O restless spirit! wherefore strain
Beyond thy sphere?
Heaven and hell, with their joy and pain,
Are now and here."

V.

THE JOY OF JESUS.

The men of the New Testament were men of joy. They differ from those of the Old Testament only in this: their joy is too deep for words; too quiet and all-pervading to be wholly spoken, even in worship; for a great joy, like a great sorrow, craves silence and mocks at words. All the higher emotions require a still and quiet heart for their home; else they stay but a short time in one place.

Some people use joy all up at once in a grand illumination of impulse that leaves the night cold and dark—so do the Methodists. Others use it as we do coal—put it in the heart of the furnace, and silently warm the whole house with it—so did the Quakers. Such is the New Testament joy—a silent, all-pervading gladness, which warmed into life every noble and manly quality. A joy hid in the very roots of the tree of life; but making all its sap sweet, its trunk firm, its boughs graceful, its leaf green, and its fruit rich and mellow.

Do you think that Jesus was never glad nor happy; never felt his whole soul thrilled with holy joy? He whose soul was all music; whose lips poured out melody like wine; whose spirit played on every string of the human heart; whose eye missed no touch of beauty, from the lily that glorified the grass to the lightning that leaped from one part of the heaven unto the other! Is it possible for a soul

to be so entirely in harmony with the universe and its God, so sensitive to the touch of spirit-fingers, and yet be nothing but a "man of sorrows"? I think not. You say that he sorrowed for sin as none other, and felt the wickedness of the world as none other. True; but did he not also see more virtue and moral beauty than ever blessed a mortal eye? We should have mourned over Magdalene as only a lost one; but he saw so much good in her to rejoice in, that he said, "Neither do I condemn thee." We look upon prodigals as objects for our tears only; but he heard the music and dancing which would celebrate his return, even while he was feeding on swine-husks. We should have lost all patience with the vacillations of Peter and the rest; they seemed only to endear them to him.

I tell you that no man can look upon this universe as Jesus did and not be happy. His biographers have naturally given only the severe, missionary side of his life. But there was another side, a rich, sunny side, to it, which we would as gladly know. He certainly enjoyed social life. He went to a wedding of his friend and countryman, and made him a present of the best wine. He was often asked out to dine, even with the Roman officers and sinners, and he always went. At evening, when the day's teaching was over, he walked out to Bethany, to spend the night with Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus. Was there no rejoicing there? No recounting the experiences of the day? No real human enjoyment of the home circle? No real friendly talk, as between men and women? It would be a libel upon him and his doctrine to say so. And besides, we have conclusive evidence that he wore a smiling face in this—that children loved him and went to him, and he took them up in his arms. Now, children know who love them and who do not,

and they know a happy face from an unhappy one. Those children who wanted to get near to Jesus, and sit on his knee, couldn't have been hired or whipped to go to John Calvin, or Jonathan Edwards, or Dr. Emmons. Think of a little child *wanting* to go to such ministers as we knew when we were children, and especially when they were in the very act of teaching, with all their church members around them; when their faces were strung up to the tension of infant damnation; "knitting their brows like gathering storm"! Jesus was no such man. There was no glare of awful dogma in his eye, no tone of vengeance in his voice, else he would never have been the children's friend. They felt drawn to him, and he to them. We can just guess with what a yearning he pressed them to his heart, rejoicing in spirit that, though God had hid the everlasting truth from the wise and prudent, he had revealed it unto babes. He must have loved children, or they would not have loved him. If he did love them, he must have been happy as often as he saw their bright and trustful faces greeting him like a fresh "Good morning" from God.

VI.

REJOICE IN THE LORD.

Joy is the ring of health in any man or woman. Sadness and melancholy come to us all in a personal way, and we must yield as the tree bows to a tempest. But it is not the normal condition. When the storm is past, the tree rights itself, and stands straight and handsome. So ought a soul to rebound from sorrow, and not cherish it as a thing to be loved. It will not please the dead we grieve for, to see us sad. Paul enjoined the Corinthians expressly upon this matter, that they must not sorrow as others who have no hope, lest the heathen should think that the Christian religion was not so cheerful and hopeful as their own. And that is the right frame of mind to cherish; the habit of looking at the bright side, and hoping for the best. It is best for ourselves; it is most helpful to others, and it shows a more perfect trust in God.

It is best for ourselves, because it is the condition of all kinds of growth. Every thing that grows is cheerful in its growth. The mind grows best when the heart is hopeful. It is then in the same mood in which the creation was made. God made the universe in a loving mood, and hence, as we put ourselves into the same frame of mind, we get hold of its secrets, and comprehend its truths. If you want to enjoy a piece of music fully, you need an argument or libretto, which puts you into the author's mood; then

the spirit and life of the music runs from his soul into yours, and you sigh and smile, and love and hate with him. So it is in our relation to this life. God ordained it in a mood of love; a love, indeed, which often rises into the higher and grander offices of discipline, under which generations sometimes bend and break; but still, as each long-hidden purpose comes to light, it is hailed as a token of a love grander than we had dreamed, more beautiful than we had hoped. I will listen to a cheerful teacher, for he is in the way of truth; but away with whine and snivel in theology as in science. Why, out of all the moods which human beings are capable of, they should have chosen the grave and mournful alone for worship, I know not. You may talk with a man upon all other subjects in a bright, cheerful way, and natural tone, as if there were grand things to live and hope for; but the moment you touch upon religion and the good God who gave all, and the good soul that may inherit all, you are amazed at the change which comes over him. His chin drops, his words are drawled, his tone changed; he stops laughing and wants to cry, as if you had referred to some delicate family matter which had broken his heart. The old Jew would have been disgusted with such performances before the Lord, and washed his hands in token of purification. If there is any one thing for which I respect Beecher more than another, it is for the merciless war which he has waged upon the whole tribe of pious croakers and snivelers, and the way in which he has insisted upon manly and womanly speech upon this as all other matters.

There is a sublime trust implied in calm and conquering cheerfulness. The soul seems to have such an understanding with the universe; such a childlike confidence that its

Father will do all things well. That a being so frail as man, with such a destiny at stake, in a condition so grand, walking amid forces whose rage he is impotent to control—that such a one can be cheerful and happy, shows an inborn conviction that God holds them all in the hollow of his hand. How sublime is such a trust! How it contrasts with the fearful gloom of guilt! How thrillingly Robert Browning brings the two into contrast in "Pippa Passes!" In the palace of the murdered Cenci are Ottima and her paramour, hating the light and all living sounds, and mocking at all the wealth which crime has brought them. Under their window, the little factory-girl passes to enjoy her one holiday, and sings as she goes,

> "The year's at the spring; the day's at the morn;
> The morning's at seven; the hill-side's dew-pearled;
> The lark's on the wing; the snail's on the thorn;
> God's in his heaven; all's right with the world."

Oh! that cheerful, childlike trust, which believes that all is right with the world because God is in heaven; which believes that whatever storms shake earth or heaven, the everlasting pillars are not shaken. Is it not sublime?

VII.

THE LIFE WHICH NOW IS.

The true condition of growth is fixedness and fidelity in the present condition. The best way to become a perfect man is to be a perfect child. The only hope of being able to think, and speak, and understand, as a man or a woman, lies in our first understanding, thinking, and speaking as a boy or girl. This thought is getting to be the conviction of the world more and more. It is the undertone of morality in all the best moods of the day. It is the direct teaching of the best poetry. Tennyson, the Brownings, Whittier, Lowell, Longfellow, and the rest unite in a grand resolve that,

> "Henceforth my heart shall sigh no more
> For olden time and holier shore;
> God's love and blessing then and there
> Are now, and here, and everywhere."

And I believe that the pulpit-teaching of all live men was never so harmonious as at the present hour upon this subject: that the true way of possessing the future is through fidelity to the present; and that the old method of teaching men to spend this life in looking away from it, either forward or backward, is simply mischievous. Concerning the old dogmas, the live and inspired men of all sects are saying, as Jesus said to the disciple, "Let the dead bury the

dead," while we follow the Truth. The Church of England is honeycombed with men who are saying, virtually, "When the church was a child, it spake as a child, it thought as a child, it understood as a child; now it has become a man, and it must put away childish things." And the same is true of every church that has a history. Hard by every old school there are a dozen new schools, as by every stump where last year stood an old, fruitless tree, this year stands a score of sprouts, withy and succulent with the new life of the root. The true law of growth is this: each human soul is rooted in a given condition, where birth, or accident, or necessity places it. Its roots spread out into all the possible relations of that condition—love of father and mother, brother and sister, neighbor and friend, work and play, wealth and comfort. Some condition of this kind every human being is placed in at birth, and through that he is to grow into all that he can rightfully attain. Now, the old method of enlarging one's life was to pull it up by the roots, through miraculous conversion, and transplant it to a new soil. The consequence was, that the greater portion dried up, and became dead to the age and its interests. The natural way is to remain in this soil of nature—this condition of necessity—and from that centre strike roots outward to the richest soils, and downward to the deepest springs. God has placed no being in a barren soil; no one where he may not find the elements of immortal life; none where, through perfect fidelity to its condition, its roots may not reach out to embrace the earth, and spread out branches and leaves to heal and overshadow it. Thus, Charlotte Brontë's life was like an acorn dropped in the cleft of a rock—a condition as hard as infelicity could make it. For a time, its lateral growth was choked by its grim surround-

ings; but at last its roots struck down so deep that they underran the rock, and then reached outward to enrich themselves from the treasures of the whole earth. And thus it may be with every life, if it is perfectly faithful and true to the condition in which it is placed. It may grow outward into the possession of all that remains for the children of God.

The figure which Paul uses to illustrate this truth is an uncommonly happy one. It is literally true and figuratively true. It is correct as a rule for the training of children; correct also as an illustration of the true law of growth for individuals, institutions, and nations. A perfect child is one that speaks, and understands, and thinks as a child. If you teach a child to speak, and understand, and think like a man, you make him neither man nor child, but a sort of human parrot. If you allow his healthy hunger for what is above him to run on before his capacity, and taste here and there a little of every thing, before he has the strength to comprehend any thing, you have destroyed that peculiar charm and felicity of childhood, namely, its wonder and aspiration. In its stead you have not a man, but a kind of moral and intellectual Tom Thumb, indifferent, stupid, and superficial, and indisposed to believe that there can be any thing new or wonderful. Nothing can be so sad as this forestalling of the thought and speech of childhood, not with manliness and womanliness, but with mannishness and womanishness. One sometimes sees a lad of ten or twelve summers with the air of the Roman emperor who offered a kingdom to the man that would invent for him a new pleasure. Such boys and girls will never put away childish things. That is not the road which leads to manhood. Because they have been mannish children they will be childish men.

How much healthier is the simplicity, the romping, awkward glee, and stammering wonder of a natural child! How much fresher his judgments or misjudgments of the world! How much keener and more penetrating his thought!

God keeps a new generation of protestants always on hand; an army of truth-tellers who come out of heaven into our homes, and see right through our cant, and affectation, and inconsistency; and compel us to blush, and whisper, and shut the door, and send them to bed. If it were not for this constant influx of nonconformists and image-breakers, God knows to what extent we should carry our falsehoods and dissimulations. "The fresh gaze of the child," says Carlyle, "is richer in significance than the forecasting of the most indubitable seer." No matter how often the restless longing of the child is brought up against the boundary of his undevelopment, and obliged to hunt over and over again the field of his present possession. No matter how much he tries to imitate a man, or to act the play of manhood on his little stage and in his little theatre-dresses. All such affectations are harmless, and only show that the appetite for what is to come has not been spoiled. The mischief is in trying to satisfy this craving for the future by taking the child on to the real stage and satisfying his curiosity, so that there is no longer any enjoyment in childish imitations of life. A part of the very life of the soul is this hunger and itching for what is before it. And hence, if you satisfy the hunger too quickly, you take so much life out of the child or man. That irritation is the friction which produces electricity and excites activity. It is the very longing for something to come, and faith that that something will come, which gives birth to wonder. It is

that which makes him look at each familiar object as if out of it might spring at any time the thing which he longs for. He is never quite certain that he shall not find a fairy in the cup of a lily or the heart of a rose. He is not certain that the birds will not stop singing, and tell him where the fairy-queen lives. He does not wholly doubt that he shall yet see a winged angel fly out of a summer cloud, and show him the golden throne. It is this wonder which flutters about the outer edge of his weakness, and tells him that all things are possible: it is this which smites the Memnon statue of our familiar life, and makes it sing in the morning light of childhood. When compared with this, how stale, and flat, and unprofitable is the premature maturity of a child who has tasted just enough of every thing it has longed for to wonder at nothing! This is a danger to the children of the rich and a compensation to the children of the poor. For I suppose that the hope of possession always occasions more joy than the reality.

There is an intermediate stage between childhood and manhood when the youth dreams indeed, but dreams that he dreams; and, as in the night, when we dream that we dream, we are near waking. Then the growing faculties give the strength which entitles him to the possession of that which he has longed for. And if he has been a perfect child, what a recompense awaits him as the reward of his fidelity! Slowly he comes alongside the men and things which he has wondered at in the distance. When he reaches them, they do not satisfy him, and he stretches on after others.

At this age parents sometimes grow alarmed to see that the dear little idol, the plaything and joy of their home, has a destiny of his own, and belongs not to them, but to God

and himself. He was loaned, not given to them. And some parents, when they see the child putting away childish things, mourn over it and try to keep him a child. They find it hard to recognize in this toy a new thought of God, a new candidate for immortality, a new destiny to be wrought upon and ripened by the realities of personal thought, and speech, and understanding. They are slow to respect his peculiarities or give place to his aspirations. This may be right to a certain extent, but it is very dangerous. You can not be too careful, parents, in using the leading-strings of a youth who is feeling for his own direction. Rules are of small value; love hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things; and love never faileth.

This history of the child is the history of institutions. Churches, creeds, rituals have their beginning in a state of childhood—in an age of earnestness, sincerity, and fearlessness. They speak the truth, embody the hope, the fear, the superstition of the age in which they grow. As such they are true to themselves. They are planted in a soil of necessity, just as the soul is. They are born usually without a wish or a thought of their own. The creed, and form, and name of churches and institutions come as unconsciously as the thought and speech of a child. In their beginning they are perfectly true to the attainment of the time. Its knowledge and ignorance, its light and darkness, its strength and weakness are reflected in them, as the same necessities are in the still waters of childhood. But the world moves; the ancient boundaries of knowledge are extended. Where the former time saw only dragon, and goblin, and griffin, and devil, and miracle, the new time sees order, and consistency, and beauty, and God. Now,

if the world would only allow the child to become a man, and put away childish things, and speak the truth about the new thought and the new discovery, institutions would grow as trees and children do, by constantly adding new life to themselves. But they will not. There are always living at the same time those who see nothing but what was in the childish speech, understanding, and thought, and those who want to put away these childish things and become men. There are always those who feel about the creed and the church as some mothers do about their children: it is better that they should always be babies than to strike off into the mountain-road of manhood. They are annoyed at the way in which these young protestants of the ages tell the truth. They find it hard to respect the opinions of these nurslings reared on their own bosoms, and they try to bully or frighten each new generation of thinkers into thinking the old thought and saying the old creed. And this experiment is tried over and over again, and always with the same result—the old school breeds a new school, the high church a low church, the orthodox a Hicksite, the right wing a left wing, the conservative a radical. And so, instead of a growth like that of morning into noon, and noon into night; a growth like that of youth into manhood, and manhood into old age—always putting away the childish and taking on the manly and womanly—we see a growth by shocks and jars, like the purification of the air by thunder-storms, or a renewing of the earth by drought or flood. The stream of history is always broken by ragged points; and each step forward is a new birth, whose throes and pains fill the world with dismay.

And so, friends, death seems to be a kind of war, a shock of summer-storm, through which we put away the childish

things of earth and begin the manhood of heaven. We should no more anticipate it by the forerunning of fancy than we do manhood in childhood. The very mystery and uncertainty of the hope are parts of its greatest blessing. Could the vail be withdrawn which separates the two worlds, and the soul be permitted to look upon those things which the heart of man can not conceive, it would unfit us for the hard work which we are to do and the hard trial which we are to bear in this world. Even those who have, as by vision, seen before them the spirit-world, seem to have been unsettled by it, and unfitted for harmonious residence in this life. That hunger for the unknown future is one of the most powerful stimulants to fidelity—one of the noblest inspirations to the thought and wonder of men. How eagerly have the human powers, goaded by this yearning to *prove* immortality, explored the mysteries of heaven and earth! They have questioned every living and inanimate thing; they have analyzed the subtlest human capacities and weighed the unseen powers, in the hope that they might find the elixir of life, that they might catch in things seen at least some type or symbol of the things not seen. But had immortality lain level to our faculties, and been as obvious as life, we should have been as careless or thoughtless of it as inhabitants of the tropics are of the fruits and roots which satisfy their hunger without toil. Depend upon it, those golden gates are wisely shut against our mortal powers. Thank God that rays enough have overleaped them to give to us a foretaste of the things that are to be! If, in this childhood of our existence, we think as children, understand as children, and speak as children, we shall in due time begin to dream that we are dreaming, and awake to dream no more. It is life that never dies, and life is ours,

and life is God's; life is the soul and reality of every thing. And as we are true to life in all the different stages of our growth, and speak honestly of it, and think truly of it, and understand it wisely, so shall we be prepared to enter upon that eternal manhood where we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known.

VIII.

THE PROVIDENCE OF NECESSITY.

The nature of man is the scholar in the school of life. And hence, like any other scholar, he is not made for the school, but the school is made for him; he is not made for his teachers, but his teachers for him. The office of all its instructors is, not to make nature over again, but to aid its development; not to create it, but to correct it. Its true law of growth is by secretion from within by the laws of its being, as an oak-tree grows; not by accretion from without, as a snow-ball grows. All the good which can come to a soul must come from its growth, not from its reconstruction. To instruct this immortal pupil in all the branches of his education, God creates geniuses of art, of science, of philosophy, of religion, and inspires them with the necessity of utterance and a mission. In their special departments they are indeed far wiser than the nature they teach; but, compared with the whole and varied wisdom of God enveloped in that nature, the wisdom of their specialty is very small. One is the actual development of a human being in one branch of knowledge in this period of time; the other is the possible development of a human being in all knowledge through all time. But it seems to be the finite condition of genius that it possess all faith in its own specialty, and of course it is essential to its mission. Hence, it is almost certain to pour itself forth in efforts to reconstruct nature, to

make men and women over again after the model of its own idea. But this nature must resist to the death. Nothing could be worse for her than such a reconstruction; therefore she avails herself of the inertia of undevelopment always found in some corner of the soul and of society, and thus resists her destruction. This inertia is often positive wickedness in its possessor, and it sometimes crucifies its teacher and friend: but it becomes providence to society; for the crucified one rests from the vain labor of reconstruction, and stimulates and inspires all souls with his life and light. It sometimes seems to me that man hints at a broader and more benevolent system of Divine Providence through what he denies than through what he accepts; through what he resists than through what he receives; through what he is not than through what he is. For when we look through society, and see what it denies, what it resists, and what it is not, we can not but wonder that law, or social order, or social progress exist at all. And who can look upon his own life, and see how indifferent, and unteachable, and inert he has been, and how thin the partition is which separates him from the poor, and unfortunate, and outcasts around him, without exclaiming, "By the grace of God, I am what I am"?

And if we must pay such a great price to protect nature from reconstruction, according to the fair-seeming plans of inspired teachers, how magnificent must the development of that nature be to atone for such waste and apparent loss! If there were no providence even in these shadows, if no praise could come from this wrath of men, then there would indeed follow what the croakers of every age are always predicting, a general dissolution and return to chaos, universal atheism, unbelief, and utter annihilation of the old

distinctions between right and wrong. But things do not go to pieces nor dissolve. Men do not become atheists, nor renounce their recognition of right and wrong. All things are permeated with a principle of life which preserves all that is essential to them. Nature has wonderful resources, and is always saving herself by her own vitality. She has taught all her teachers so far, and she will continue to teach them all. She uses her own earthiness to filter the waters of life with which the inspired ones would refresh her, and purifies them in the course of ages from all taint of mortality. This nature will, sooner or later, absorb the wisdom of all its teachers, and still demand more light. It must triumph.

These facts teach, further, that we should have faith in human nature and in God's providential guidance of it. How slowly we learn this! Every teacher, from the parent to the priest, attacks each new type of life as it comes from its Maker, with all the necessities of its destiny asleep in its little bosom, and begins to cut and chisel and hammer it to some other model. I wonder we do not rather stand in awe before each one, and pray that we may help and not harm it! We may indeed guide, restrain, and balance a development—a nature, like a tree, may defeat itself by its own luxuriance—but, for heaven's sake, let us do it, if we can, with nature's methods, not with our own whims or crotchets; much less let us dare touch it in our anger!

There is a tendency everywhere to overestimate teaching and to underestimate the schools of life and growth. We attribute too much to doctoring, too little to exercise. How many specifics we have for saving society! One would save it with Graham bread; another with some kind of "pathy;" another with dumb-bells; another with the positive philoso-

phy; another with chemistry; and another with some style of "ism." But I will tell you what will save society—her own rugged constitution which will not break down *with* all this drugging or without it.

I heard a sermon, not long since, on that subject so common in the pulpit, and always treated in the same way, "What Christianity has done for the world." It made a comparison between the world as it was eighteen hundred years ago and as it is to-day, and attributed the difference to Christianity. I look upon that method as a positive slander of human nature. It argues upon the ground that the world has done nothing for itself during these eighteen hundred years. One might as well compare the strength, and honor, and judgment, and enterprise of a full-grown man with the weakness, and peevishness, and indolence of a baby, and say the change was owing to the effects of a certain boarding-school. That may have had its effects; but the main difference is the difference between childhood and manhood. I wonder whether an unprejudiced observer looking, at this hour, upon the two nations for whom Christianity has done most, would find it easier to tell what Christianity had or had not done for the world.

One half of one nation is in a war of rebellion *for* slavery; and the other half is trying to suppress it, if possible, without destroying slavery; and the other Christian nation is in full sympathy with that half which she knows to be fighting *for* slavery, even if the other half is *not* fighting against it. I think it would not be unprofitable to show what Christianity has *not* done for the world. But I have no taste for such an inquiry, because I do not think Christianity has been overestimated, but falsely estimated, and that human nature has been underestimated.

It seems to me that we should have all faith in this universe. It is worthy of it. It is indeed a terrible discipline to keep our faith alive. We often cry in anguish, "O Lord! how long? But it is all the hope we have. There is a volume of truth in a remark of Emerson that, "As we go from the spirited meeting of the transcendental club, or the abolition club, or the temperance club, and walk out into the night and see the stars wheeling on in the old spaces, and find the old, cool tranquillity everywhere, a voice speaks to us from nature, saying, 'What! so hot, my little man?'"

But let me not close without reminding you that practically there is no rule but Paul's: however much our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, we may not do evil that good may come. We can not get behind this truth. Because God can and will use our wickedness for the trial and discipline of society, it is not the less our wickedness. Had we been true and innocent, there would have been just so much the less need of trial and discipline. Just as the wood and sand which collect in some noble river may choke its channel and resist its waters, and thus occasion the turning of a million spindles, so we, by our indifference, and indolence, and wickedness, may obstruct the currents of holy influence which are sweeping through society and turn them aside to water other lands and beautify other plains. But can we afford to be only the *débris* in life's river? Can we afford to be the passive occasions of power when we might be its living sources? The pendulum of our personal life is so mysteriously attached to the vast machinery of Providence that, whether it swing forward or backward, the hand on the dial moves on. But does it make no difference with us? We can, indeed, see but a

short way down the long path of life, and can comprehend but little of the effects of our activities here; but this we do know, at every turn of the road there stands this motto, "Do right, and good must come." The right road can not lead to the wrong place, although that place be never so far away. But let this comfort us in the midst of our work: though our honest plans seem to fail, they do not fail; though our own people will not hear nor receive us, though friendly hands are unclasped, and friendly voices grow harsh and scornful, and we are driven to the Gentile stranger, let us not doubt that our failure is our success and the real gain of the world. Do not doubt that your child's nature, and your own nature, and the nature of society are as dear to God as they can be to you, and the resultant of your labor and their assistance is your providential life-work.

> "Chances have laws as fixed as planets have;
> And disappointment's dry and bitter root,
> Envy's harsh berries, and the choking pool
> Of the world's scorn, are the right mother-milk
> To the tough hearts that pioneer their kind."

IX.

EACH A PENNY.

FAITHFULNESS, and not success, is the true criterion of service and reward in the providence of God. It is not those who are employed earliest, nor those who work longest, nor those who accomplish most, who receive the greatest reward from the householder; but those who are most willing to work, those who would be employed, those who wait sadly in the market-place and see the strong and healthful go to the vineyard before them—these also receive their penny. The penny is of no importance in the parable. It is meant to illustrate the equality of God's approbation. The different times of commencing labor are of no importance; they illustrate only the great consoling truth that

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

There are, broadly speaking, two classes of people in the world—the passive and the active; those who wait and yearn and long, and those who labor and struggle and achieve. The active ones naturally regard action as the only service, and are very apt to despise the waiting ones, and look down upon them because they are not hired to labor in the vineyard. The world goes on estimating desert by noise and bustle, divine favor by worldly success, spiritual power by temporal advantage. Yet life is full of those who are waiting in the market-place, who would as gladly serve

as any who have been hired; men and women whose souls are hungry for work and a mission, and none is open to them. And does not the householder care for nor reward such? Does his favor depend upon work when work can not be had, except at the price of slavery? Does his reward depend upon success when success is impossible except at the price of shame? This parable says No.

But there are two kinds of passive people, and two kinds of active people. There are passively passive people, and actively passive people. There are passively active people, and actively active people. I think these distinctions must be obvious to the most common observation. Indeed, it seems to me to pervade the entire kingdom of nature, and I can easily associate it with colors, sounds, tastes, as well as with character. Is there not such a thing in nature as a live repose and a dead repose? We speak of a dead stillness—have you never experienced a live stillness? We speak of a dead calm—have you never felt a live calm? Is there not a wide difference between the repose of the same landscape in a thick, sultry August day, and its repose on a June day—in expectancy before a shower or in jubilee after it? Most certainly there is, and it illustrates the difference in passive characters. Some are passive from mere absence of activity—a purely negative passivity. They have not energy enough to be active. It is not the result of physical debility, nor the prostration of hopeless failure, after long and sorrowful struggle; but it is purely the result of indolence. Such persons stand in the market-place because they had rather stand there than work in the vineyard. Their idleness is voluntary; they would not be faithful if they had an opportunity. They would not work if they were hired; or

if they did work, would not earn their penny. It was not such passive people who were received on an equality with those who had borne the burden and heat of the day.

The actively passive are those whose idleness is involuntary, who do not work because no one hires them. They abhor idleness. The peace of each day is spoiled by the chafing of unused powers. As they stand in the market-place and see others go, singing and rejoicing, to their labor, they feel as the bird does when through the bars of his cage he sees his companions sporting in the unbounded sky, or as a prisoner when he hears through his window the song of an old playmate. Their waiting is a devouring longing. They feel as nobly born, as highly gifted, as capable of work, as deserving of employment, as any who do work. Such are the waiting ones who are employed at the eleventh hour. And who shall say that such do not deserve to take their place in the favor of God beside any who have borne the burden and heat of the day?

If we consider the two classes of active people, we shall see who would begrudge the penny to those waiting souls to whom God hath not yet opened a door of work. There are first the passively active people. These are they who do not labor from the duty of it, but from the necessity of it. They do not feel any responsibility for the use of their talents. They do not work to please the householder of the vineyard; nor is it because they perceive that activity is the great law of life, and work the condition of harmony. They do not feel that God has given them talents for which they must return usury; nor do they feel that the end of labor is to bless and help mankind. In other words, it is not moral and spiritual fidelity to God which makes them so careful and troubled about many things. They labor because

they are obliged to labor. If they could get money by standing idle in the market-place, they would certainly do so. They are impelled through the round of daily duty by no sense of the dignity of work, but by a simple stress of necessity. Hence, such persons are naturally anxious to make the most money in the smallest time, and are consequently jealous of all who make as much money in less time. But are such persons dearér to the heavenly Father than those who would gladly serve him to the utmost of their ability, could their hands find any thing to do?

We can not place too much importance on this distinction between the passive worker and the active waiter. Many and sad are the wrongs which result from the want of such a distinction. Noisy, bustling activity, whether it comprehend itself or not, and especially if it happens to be successful, receives all the recognition and applause. But some of the very highest qualities of character, some of the most godlike elements of our nature, are illustrated in those who are compelled to do nothing, as the world estimates doing. Who, for example, receive the gratitude and praise of the country for the victories which have just been won?—victories which give a new nobility to the name of republican institutions; which make volunteer armies of freemen a terror to wrong-doers. Certainly the men who were on the ground, and able to participate in the battles; and that is right. But there were hundreds of men languishing in the hospitals as willing to fight as the bravest of their comrades. I tell you, friends, the trial of these sick men wasting their manhood by slow disease, thinking every hour of themselves and of loved ones at home, was a hundred times more severe than that of their comrades, intoxicated with the terror of battle and maddened by the sight of blood. All honor to

those brave boys who, for three days, bore the burden and heat of battle! They deserve all that a grateful country can bestow, and their names will go down in history with those of patriots and heroes. But there is another book, a record kept by angels, wherein are written, side by side with those who stormed the breach, the names of many rough men who, dying in hospitals, would have shed their blood as freely in the work of war as they did shed their tears that they could only wait.

And to go one step further back. When we speak of the trials and distresses of this war, we speak of men as the great sufferers and saviors. But it is not so. Men, under the excitement of the moment, enlist and go to the war. There every thing is new to them, and the novelties of constant change leave little time for regretful memories. But how different with their wives, mothers, sisters at home! To them there is no excitement but that of increasing anxiety; no change but that of alternate hopes and fears. Every day the same little family gathers around the wife to inquire if father is sick, or killed, or taken prisoner, or coming home soon. And every day her heart, itself craving comfort, must invent some new maternal solace for the griefs of these little ones. Oh! who can tell the sum of anguish which is felt in a hundred thousand homes the moment any intelligence of the movement of our army is reported? Depend upon it, that upon woman, now as ever, falls the burden and the agony of war. She, far more than man, is the sufferer for, and equally with him is to be the savior of this country. For who is to prevent a deluge of barbarism from the effects of this war? Who is to save the soldier from the savageness which his profession almost necessitates? Who shall teach him to lay aside his rough ways,

his coarse speech, his uncleanly habits, and become again the gentle, refined, Christian husband, father, friend, and citizen? Who is to teach his children that war is not a thing to be coveted for glory's sake, but a thing to be abhorred for God's sake and humanity's? Who, indeed, but the patient mother, sister, wife, who through these long, anxious days is waiting before God, seeking help and strength? And do you doubt that these also shall receive their reward? And can it be less than that of the laborer? Certainly it can not be.

The world owes as much to those who wait, looking and listening for the coming of the householder, as to those who bear the burden and heat of the day. Take comfort then, ye who would serve, but can only wait! Take comfort, mothers toiling in the unseen work of household life; and ye, who bear abuse, neglect, hard words, while craving sympathy and love, and do not doubt that you are laboring for the great householder! Take comfort, young man or maiden, longing, aspiring, praying for a work worthy of your powers; your longing is labor; your waiting is work!

"Ah! do not doubt that to our praise
Good God not only reckons
The moments when we tread his ways,
But when the spirit beckons."

But there is a kind of activity which is the result of the highest possible quality of character. It is a combination of the passive and the active. I have called it the actively active. I mean an intelligent activity—a voluntary consecration of energy. A person who has reached this stage of development knows that there is no happiness in inaction. The ghosts of wasted hours haunt him, awake or asleep. He may not work with his hands, nor do any special thing;

but activity he must have, because he has found it to be the only law of life. He must work at something, because through work alone he is able to satisfy his conscience and feel himself united with the working universe; because through work alone he is able to help others or able to acquire the best means of self-culture; because through it alone he is able to enjoy beauty, acquire truth, work righteousness, and feel the approbation of his God. But such persons must also have their seasons of active waiting, of silent preparation for more active working. They will have their nights upon the mountain, their days of temptation in the wilderness; but these are only to help them work the work of him that sent them, while it is day. While they wait in the market-place for some great cause to claim them, they learn the heart's full scope, and at the eleventh hour climb speedily from hope to hope, and stand side by side with the earlier laborers in the realization of their longing. It is in their hours of active repose that those great accidents happen to them by which they are led into some new land of promise. In such moods, lying idly in the orchard, a falling apple brings secret messages from the Almighty which make known the laws that bind all worlds together into one. It is said that all great inventions, like the telescope and the polarization of light, were the results of accident. But it is to be remarked that the accidents happened to good mechanics or shrewd inventors, never to the passively passive people. These persons are not envious of worldly success, for they find a better within themselves.

But so few are found who combine both these essentials that God supplies society with many of each. Yea, his providence wrings a reaction from the forced activity of the miser, the passive activity of the unconsecrated worker,

which enriches the soil of his vineyard. And thousands he has who live in the love of life, and who hope from an abundance of life to secure salvation—those who live for humanity, who are active and public-spirited, striving for culture and the highest development. Oh! how these prune and beautify the vineyard of civilization. But, thank Heaven! all around this vineyard stand those who can love and bless the worker, though they themselves must stand idle—those who catch glimpses of light and beauty which the dust of activity conceals from the laborer. These too are servants of the Almighty. And blessed are they who see that it is so, and who do not grudge these waiting ones any reward that comes to them, whether it be in inmost character or in the love and homage of discerning souls. The ability to do this—to rejoice in the work or in the happiness of others, though we ourselves are doomed to idleness, or can not see that we are being rewarded for our toil—is itself a sort of work and helpfulness which can in nowise fail of its reward.

" She stood outside the gate of heaven and saw them entering in,
A world-long train of shining ones all purified from sin.

" The hero-martyr in that blaze uplifted his strong eye,
And trod firm the reconquered soil of his nativity!

" And he who had despised his life and laid it down in pain,
Now triumphed in its worthiness and took it up again.

" The holy one who had met God in desert cave alone,
Feared not to stand with brethren around the Father's throne.

" They who had done in darkest night the deeds of light and flame,
Circled with them about as with a glowing halo, came.

" And humble souls who held themselves too dear for earth to buy,
Now entered through the golden gate to live eternally.

"And when into the glory the last of all did go,
'Thank God! there *is* a heaven,' she cried, 'though mine is endless woe.'

"The angel of the golden gate said, 'Where, then, dost thou dwell?
And who art thou that enterest not?'—'A soul escaped from hell.'

"'Who knows to bless with prayer like thine in hell can never be;
God's angel could not, if he would, bar up this door from thee.'

"She left her sin outside the gate, she meekly entered there,
Breathed free the blessed air of heaven, and knew her native air."

X.

ENDURE HARDNESS.

"ENDURE hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."—2 TIM. 2 : 3.

YES, I even like the word endurance. For we have lost an element of strength in giving it up as a heathen virtue. It is not the highest virtue, it is not the most teachable state of mind in which to receive trial; but it is a source of strength. And as compared with the Christian virtue of simple meekness, is far more noble. There are times when there is nothing but endurance for us; times when hardness thickens into a terrible fate, in which, for the time, we can see no love, no pity, no reason. Blessed is the soul which can simply endure, simply exist, though it be dumb, or as

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

If it can do the first work, endure the first agony, and then the next, and the next, it shall be led to a vision of higher beauty, a sense of deeper harmony.

There are three kinds of endurance. There is, first, that of the stoic, who endures hardness by hardness, bracing his whole nature against an iron fate. He shuts the avenues of his soul against painful impressions, and builds a wall of indifference around his susceptibilities through which nothing is allowed to pass which can disturb his boasted equa-

nimity. Marcus Aurelius says, the stoic bids nature "Give what thou wilt, and take what thou wilt."

Another kind of endurance is the pietistic, which becomes oblivious to suffering and trouble through religious enthusiasm. The rapt soul gazes so intently on the Invisible and Eternal that all finite ills are swallowed up in the infinite beauty. They suffer every earthly loss and endure every degree of hardness while the entranced spirit walks the Elysian fields of religious fancy. It is the very opposite of stoicism; for while that loses the natural effect of hardness by excluding it from the heart, this loses it by receiving it into a soul too much occupied to attend to it; as you may lose the effect of a strain of music by stopping your ears and not hearing it, or by fixing your attention on something else and not attending to it.

"Before the power of love divine
Creation fades away;
Till only God is seen to shine
In all that we survey."

The third kind of endurance is the Christian, which has its fairest and best type in Jesus. It is not a stoicism which will not love, for fear the loved one may die; which will not feel, lest it give pain; which will not look into the dark abysses, lest it be terrified; which will not contemplate crucifixion for principle, lest it be unnerved by it. Nor is it a pietism which craves martyrdom, which covets pain, which hides suffering in beatific visions of future blessedness; but it conquers by love, opens all the windows of the soul to love and sympathy, and, twining the nerves of the spirit around every human relation, sensitive to the least and the greatest throbs of suffering, receiving it into all the channels of

life, is yet willing to do and bear, willing to suffer and endure all things, for love of God and man. Many persons have said that the agony in the garden showed weakness in Jesus. It certainly did show that he was a man, but a man preparing his flesh for a willing sacrifice. Every nerve of his woman's nature was on fire with pain; and as a man he cried, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; but all the greater was the heroism of the resolution which followed: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." There is no other measure of his fortitude than the struggle it cost him to bring his mind to it. Paul showed the same kind of endurance when he said, amid trials which made him sick of life, that it was far better for him to depart and be with Jesus, but to remain in the flesh was necessary for his brethren. Wellington was wont to say that the best soldier was the man who was afraid of death, but was not afraid of duty. It is not the man who can not feel what peril is, nor the man too much abstracted to see it, who suffers to most purpose or does his work best; but the man who sees trial, who feels suffering in all its intensity, and yet, for the sake of duty, will endure all things. It is not simply that Jesus suffered what others inflicted upon him which makes his example the best type of endurance. He was impelled to inflict hardship upon others. He was to do a work, to speak a truth, which must bring great strife and suffering into the world. It would set father and mother against daughter and son, and make foes of the members of the same household, until it seemed to him as if he had been sent, not to send peace on earth, but a sword. That was hardness. He must speak a great many unpleasant truths, tell his best friends of their worst faults, and commit to his disciples a doctrine which would bring them to poverty and

social disgrace. That was hardness. Yet loving peace, and harmony, and comfort, he saw that war for principle, discord for duty, discomfort for the truth and right, was far better than peace, and harmony, and comfort could be while the world was full of unrebuked wickedness. From the beginning he expected hardness, and prepared for it, and taught his friends to expect it; and when it came, there was endurance enough to match it.

My friends, my word to you is this. Expect hard fortune, and equip yourselves for it. Expect the loss of property, and friends, and outward advantage. But count the cost of a strong personal life in a world like this; count the conditions of obtaining an immortal existence separate from all the existences of the universe; consider what a foundation of strength, honor, and heroism it must have; and see how the changes of life are always bringing us back to the original sources of power, and how much iron the healthful blood must hold, and then learn to endure it, not as an accident, not as an unmeaning fatality, but as the condition of fulfilling the proudest prophecy of the soul.

XI.

JUDGING THE BIBLE.

Why does not man yield to some freak of his corrupt nature, and some time take a notion to throw away Shakespeare, or Homer, or Beethoven, or renounce his love of the Alps, or Niagara, and call them all ugly and unworthy of reverence? Because all these things meet a want of his nature, and hence he keeps and loves them. They require no other authority than their own power to satisfy man's love of beauty. And why does not man agree with himself, all at once, to abolish the difference between right and wrong? Because the distinction satisfies a demand of his conscience, which is an essential and permanent demand; and that alone is sufficient to perpetuate the distinction. And the same is true of truth in all its forms. In the long run, man separates truth from error. The truth he will not give up; the error he can not be *compelled* to keep.

Now, if the Bible is to take its place among the things which satisfy some permanent want of the nature of man, it must share the fate of all other objects. It must be trusted to his moral and religious nature, precisely as Shakespeare is trusted to his æsthetic nature, or Euclid and Newton to his intellectual nature. And if men had as much confidence in the Bible, as a source of supply of man's reli-

gious want, as they have in Shakespeare and Euclid in their respective spheres, they would never demand any other authority for the Bible. The very effort which they make to keep it by force of outside authority betrays a want of faith in it. When we begin to prop a building, it shows we are losing confidence in its ability to stand on its own foundation. Otherwise they would say, "If man will keep alive Shakespeare, and Newton, and Plato, on account of the partial beauty, truth, and goodness in them, surely they will need no whip nor spur to compel them to keep alive the Bible, with its truth, beauty, charity, and love." Do we betray a want of faith in the Bible when we put it beside other books, and give it to man in the full faith that his love for truth and beauty, which have made even Homer and Plato immortal on the earth, will make the Bible immortal also? Or do they show a want of faith, who will not trust their Holy Book in an equal trial for immortality with a nature which has made even profane books immortal? When men say, "You must not point out the untruth of the Bible: if you do, men will throw away the truth of it;" or when they say, "If you point out the deformity, they will throw away the beauty;" or, "If you reject the immorality, they will despise its morality," they betray the saddest want of faith both in the Bible and in man. For do but consider it a moment. If we condemn the act of Noah, while in a state of drunkenness, breathing horrid curses upon his own children, will men therefore think the less fondly of that dying cry of Jesus, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do?" If we condemn the doctrine, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," will men therefore despise the other command, "Love thine enemy"? If we reject the miracle of turning water into wine, will it make the

parable of the prodigal son less beautiful? If we think the doctrines of demoniacal possession and the millennium erroneous, will it affect the blessing pronounced upon the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the merciful, the faithful? Will it not rather give power and prominence to the true and beautiful objects of the Bible, if we take the brush of criticism and paint these errors into a dark background, or the unimportant things into neutral tints, just where they belong?

I can tell you, friends, some one who loves it must perform this friendly office for the Bible, or the work will be roughly done by those who do *not* love it. The inconsistencies of the old claim for the Bible are seen and perfectly well understood outside the church; and if the pulpit is not magnanimous enough to confess its old error, the Bible will be thrown aside altogether, as it is indeed now in a fair way of being. For it is plain to be seen that the Bible was never read less, in Christendom, than it is at this day. Thousands and tens of thousands never hear it, except as it is badly read from the pulpit, and even then many are glad when that part of the service is over. A most religious churchwoman said to me not long since, "I can not understand why it is, but I seem to care less about reading the Bible the older I grow, and the more readily I learn to associate the thought and presence of God with all things around me." She felt that it was very wicked; and yet no amount of trying would seem to improve the matter any. Now, her feeling is the feeling of thousands, who find all the essential truths of the Bible more freshly and powerfully illustrated in the literature, art, and science of the day than in the foreign and obscure statements of the Bible. If this tendency is ever counteracted, it will be done by teaching

people that they are at liberty to open the Bible as they do any book; find any passage of truth or beauty which inspires or satisfies them, and leave the rest to take care of itself. They must be taught that they are not obliged to accept all or reject all; that those who love the Bible *most* may be its severest *critics;* that it can not stand in the way of science or philosophy, nor supersede the necessity of individual judgment.

Did you ever reflect that this is in fact the way in which the Bible has always been received? The most inveterate Scripture-reader has his favorite passages, which he reads in the various conditions in which his discipline places him. Even if he reads from Genesis to Revelation every year, the reading in course is merely formal, and has no effect upon his mind and heart. But when he is in trouble—when a loved wife or child dies, and life seems robbed of every joy—he very carefully *selects* his Scripture. The curses of David are mockish to him; but he reads with tenderness, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;" or "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." He passes over the genealogies of Matthew or Luke; but lingers with affection on that sweet poem, "Let not your heart be troubled." And so it is always. Bibles that are well read are well worn at the best places. Because, when men and women are in earnest, and hungering for comfort in the fast of a great sorrow, they will of themselves "judge what is right." And to this certain instinct of our nature we commit the keeping of the Bible. The more thoroughly I purge myself from all superstition about the Bible, as the word of God, the more heartily do I love it, as the inspiration and the help of man.

XII.

SHEEPFOLDS.

"I AM the door," said Jesus. How absurd, then, to claim that he was the sheepfold itself, or the pasture itself, or that the door of communion with the infinite is the infinite, or that Christ, who found God in life, was God. Did you ever observe the peculiar reading of the verse, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and go in and out, and find pasture." Now, he could not find pasture by going in. There is no pasture in the sheepfold. There is nothing green or living there; it is merely a place to sleep in, a preparation to go out again. I should like to hold the church strictly to its own definition of this text. If the sheepfold is the church, and out of it is the world, very good. The church, then, is a place to sleep in; a place where no living thing is, not a blade of grass, nor a lily of the field. It is a place which we are never to enter, so long as there is light enough to see to be elsewhere. All the pasture is, then, in the world. The springing grass, the living water, the cooling shade, are out of the church. With the first streak of daylight we go out to gather life, and strength, and joy, and beauty, and health from the world. And at twilight, when the coming darkness reminds us of the close, dull fold, we only wish it were always day, that we might not be obliged to sleep at all. But we will release the church from the alternatives of its own claim. It is not a place for sleep, but a place for work, and search for new

pastures. We will not build a wall as high as heaven between it and the world, but would rather take it all down, believing that the going out and the coming in are both alike essential to salvation. We would leave each soul free to rest in the sheltering fold, or feed in the infinite pasture of truth. The necessities of life, of a consecrated, harmonious life, will mark out the true sphere of the church. There is but one test by which every thing essential to man asserts its own authority; that test is, "Does it feed a hunger of his nature? Does it quench a thirst of his spirit?" Whatever does this, justifies itself; there can be no other authority to a free soul than the authority of truth, and no other test of truth than the fact that it gives pasturage to the seeking spirit. The truth shall make you free, and the soul left to this freedom will naturally find for itself shelter in the fold of a true church. But the door must not be guarded by a priest, lest he bolt and fasten it, and shut us in when we want to go out into living nature. We will go to the church which will open a door of thought, through which we may look in upon the infinite beauty, goodness, truth. We will go to the fold where the weary life may receive new consecration and new harmony. We will go where music, and thought, and silence, and sympathy may give wings to our spirits, and bear them up to pure, cloudless day. And while the door shall not be shut by priests, nor bolted by a dogma, we will enter cheerfully, and rest securely, or sleep sweetly, if we know that the door is watched only by the Good Shepherd who knoweth his own sheep, and calleth them by name, and smiles his benediction upon those who go out and those who come in by the way of the blessed life.

XIII.

WHITHER GOEST THOU?

It is common in theological discussions to divide mankind into two classes—saints and sinners, good and bad, saved and lost. But it is an entirely artificial classification. It is wholly wrong to base a judgment concerning the absolute condition of men upon the place which they happen to occupy at any given time. It would be absurd to draw a line across the Hudson River at West-Point, and say that all boats above that line were going to Albany, and all below it going to New-York. Absolutely, a boat which is within ten rods of Albany, headed toward New-York, with all steam on, is nearer New-York than a boat close by the wharf here, which is headed for Albany with steam on. The river of life is dotted all over with precious life-boats ascending and descending. They were launched at different points, they have different degrees of speed; some are propelled from hearts of fire within, some blown by winds of influence from without; some are freighted with five talents, some with one; some are started in one direction, some in another. Now, the church stretches her line across this stream at the point of conformity, and says, all above this are going to life, all below it are going to death. But God, who seeth not the

church record but regardeth the heart, seeth many a feeble soul born at the very gates of death who has manfully set his boat against the stream, and is rowing with all his might to ascend it. He may be far, far below the church point of conformity; yea, below society's point of propriety, and he may die there with his bark set toward the fountain. God will not say, Where were you? but, Whither were you going? On the other hand, God sees many a man born far above the line of church conformity, who ingloriously sets his boat downward with the current of popularity, and although he may die long before he drifts past the church line, or society's line, yet he is absolutely nearer moral death than the other who was born at its very door. The prodigal was really further from home when he stood on its threshold, resolved to seek a far country, than when, in that far country, he came to himself and said, "I will arise and go to my father."

XIV.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

It is not the exquisite ray of the rose jewel which best illustrates the beneficence of light. It is its daily luxuriance; its steady beaming on the evil and the good; its persistent healing, and blessing, and creating, which most fills us with gratitude for the gift of sunshine. So it is not the triumph of souls in great rose acts of heroism which best illustrates the beneficence of an exalted love, but its daily luxuriance, its steady beaming upon the evil and the good; its persistent struggling through the forests of life to "paint the glade beneath our feet and give a glory to the grass." It gives courage in the small annoyances of common life, no less than heroism in its greater trials: courage to be an honest man; courage to speak the truth; courage to sacrifice self for principle; courage to bear all things, hope all things, endure all things. The smallest opening in our daily career which gives the soul an out-look upon the clear sky of infinite love, upon the green fields of infinite beauty, will make a sick-room, a parlor, a workshop, a farm-house, a counting-room, hospital-tent, a sweeter place to live in than any palace can be where the soul sees no further than the clouds. In like manner this love gives liberty. The liberty wherewith Christ maketh his children free was no other than the liberty of love. And what does that mean? It means this. If a man does not love the

right, he must have his power of doing wrong abridged; if he does not love that which is pure, he must be denied the liberty of loving that which is impure; if he does not love truth, he must be prevented from loving error; if he does not love God, he must be hedged about with obstacles to prevent him from loving Satan. Now, that was Judaism; and it was not liberty, but bondage. Jesus reversed this attitude of the soul toward duty, and said that he who loves God with all his mind, heart, and strength, needs no such abridgment of his liberty. If he is allowed to do whatever he wills, he will not will to do any thing which is not allowable. And if he does, through error or impulse, wander from the straight path, the lode-star of his heart's love will, sooner or later, bring him back to it. Where true love is, there is law. Turn a set of men who do not love art into an art-gallery, and you will be obliged to post up rules, "Do not touch the pictures." But if you fill the room with artists, they will need no command—their love of the art will extemporize laws as they are needed. Thus is love always equivalent to law; and hence the apostles called Christ the end of the law.

When Paul writes to the Corinthians, giving some advice, he says, "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." This should be our motto. We can have no dominion over each other's faith, and hence we are not responsible for it; but we can be helpers of each other's joy. And when we see this love, we may trust it with liberty to work and worship according to the dictates of its own free choice. It is vain to erect our guide-boards over the field of truth, and write thereon, "Go not this way, for it leads to the desert of atheism;" "Nor this way, for it leads to the lair of nonconformity;" "Nor this, for it will

take you to the wilderness of free-thought." It is better, far, that we try to awaken in the hearts of men a true love for truth and right, and then set them at liberty in the green pasture. They will not fail to hear his voice when he calleth them by name. From such a steady attraction we shall make no fatal deviations.

Is a man earnest, and has he given his heart to the highest and the best? Has he true love and true courage? Then give him true liberty, and his liberty will be fidelity to law.

But, once more, this love, when pure, and courageous, and free, will also be helpful. No love is true which is not helpful. If we love a person for the pleasure or profit he can give us, it is a small and selfish love, and does not cast out, but only creates fear—a fear lest we lose the pleasure or the profit. Nor does it make us free, but enslaves us to the prospect of gain through friendship. It is incapable of rising into the higher offices of discipline. When parents love a child merely because the child flatters their pride, such a love will certainly show itself in ruinous provisions for the child's imaginary wants. But when parental love shows itself in helpfulness; when it has the courage to rebuke and deny, as well as the affection to cherish and caress, then only is it pure and like God's love. When a man and his wife love each other only for the convenience of it, it is no true love. When they help each other to answer the highest and best end of existence, then there is true love; and so on. If I have an ambition for you, it is that this truth may become the law of your spontaneous life; for what other result of church influence is comparable with this of helpfulness inspired by love? We can speak the truth to those we love, and they will hear it from us, and

so will we from them, as they or we will not from the world. True love is not that flat and unprofitable thing which romances dream of; but the most vital power and the most powerful vitality which can energize a soul. Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you;" but how had he loved them? He had told them their faults; he had rebuked their sins and corrected their errors; but he had given them such help—had transformed their poor fisherman-life into such different life—that he and they might well look upon it as a true type of true love. This is a universal law of relation between man and his means of growth. He who loves a church as a means of helpfulness to his soul, and of his soul to other souls, loves it truly, and will give it all the help in his power, and receive from it all the help in its power. He will help it to be courageous, and free, and abounding in good works. But if he loves it for any other purpose—its size, or show, or popularity, or wealth, or any thing but as a means of getting and giving help—it is a false love, and will do him harm. And so far is it from casting out fear, that it creates little else. If a man loves a church for its wealth, he is fearful lest something will be said or done there which will make it poor; if for its numbers, that something will be said or done to create division; if for its aristocracy, that something will be said or done to make it appear democratic. He only has a right love for the church who believes that two or three met together in the spirit of Christ's love, courage, liberty, and helpfulness are a truer church than all the formalists of Gerizim and Mount Zion.

And the same is true of our relations to our country. A true love will make a true patriot. It will make a patriot who loves his country as a means through which he be-

comes a sharer in the destinies of the world—a helper of humanity and humanity a helper of him. He will love his country because it is a step in the flight of altar-stairs by which the race goes up to its true destiny of universal liberty. Oh! how our poor country needs such patriots to-day; men, women, and little children who love her with a courageous love, a love which will hope and prophesy great things of her future; patriots who love freedom for themselves, and who respect it as a right of others; patriots who count it clear gain when they are counted worthy to help their country. To give it their faith, their blood, their bounty, their all, is so much treasure laid up in heaven.

Whatever other great effects may result from this struggle, the greatest will be to create in us all a braver, freer, and more helpful love of country. The want of this has been our greatest curse, our most fatal disease. All other evils were but symptoms of this. If the religious men of this nation loved it as Jesus loved Jerusalem when he wept over it, and prophesied its destruction; if they had as courageously rebuked its iniquity, in the name of God, and yet spoken the truth in a love which could have wept, we should not have been where we are to-day. Alas! that through this old heathen school of war we are to be taught in this century the Christian grace of a world-embracing love. But come at what cost it may, it will be cheaply purchased.

XV.

PAST AND PRESENT.

"Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this."—Eccl. 7 : 10.

We do not inquire wisely when we speak thus of our former days; first, because the change is not in the times, but in ourselves. We see them from a different point of view. We do not judge them now, smarting under the pruner's knife, but in the soft light of memory, in the pure spaces of thought, and we are able to see that the discipline of those days had special reference to the happiness and success of these. All that we say of childhood was true of it, and all that old age says of maturity is true of it; but we did not see it so at the time. These lights were indeed in our sky, while we were under their meridian ray; but the sun of ambition was up, and the earth was full of its gairish light, and we saw them not. Now, as the sun descends and the twilight steals upon the distant east, and the air grows clear and still, we see that our sky was full of stars. And we do not inquire wisely, secondly, because we do not learn the right lesson from the facts. When we first discover that the past was a good time, that childhood was full of joy, and youth and manhood full of blessedness which is now passed away, we are impatient and gloomy, and faithless about the present. We wish the old times would come again. Whereas, it should teach the very opposite lesson.

It should teach us that somewhere in the present, in some unsearched nook or corner, are all the elements of the "golden age;" that if we are disappointed in our onward pursuit, it is only that we may look about us more closely for things which we were overlooking in our haste. But even if no such explanation of our present trial is found, the very fact that the former times seem better than these, should teach us to have faith that, when the smart of this hour's trial is over, we shall look upon it from the future and see its meaning. Instead of making us impatient and gloomy, it should make us patient, and courageous, and hopeful. When the present time seems hard to you, ask yourself, What have I missed? What can I find in the darkness of adversity which I did not see in the light of success?

And why, in like manner, does a nation inquire unwisely, when it cries, The former times were better than these? Because it is not true of any live nation; it is a trick of the imagination or a false sentimentalism. The moment any object of thought is removed from the correction of fact and present reality, imagination begins to play her magic games. Just in proportion as a better criticism corrects the judgment of the past, in that proportion do we find that those times were far behind these in interest and promise. What was that golden time which the English are so fond of praising? It was a time when the best establishments of the island did not live so well as most of our day-laborers live; when the students of Cambridge dined on a farthing's worth of beef, a little salt and oatmeal, and nothing else; when the king himself did not get such good medical advice and treatment as the poorest man of our city can get for nothing. It was the time of the sweating-sickness and the plague; a time when the northern counties were the theatre of constant

robberies, murders, conflagrations, and violence of all sorts; a time when a capricious queen was sole guide of church discipline; when the jails were filled with men like Coverdale, Johnson, and Wentworth, guilty of nothing but pure morals and doubts of the queen's infallibility; when the court was ruled by libertines like Leicester, and the church by bigots like Cranmer; when more than seventy-two thousand persons suffered death in a single reign at the hands of the executioner. This was the age of Good Queen Bess! Did the people who lived in it feel that it was a golden one? Alas! how little do we realize what that time was to those pure, earnest men who loved freedom and truth more than the favor of princes. How lonely in the swarms of men! What prisoners to their great thoughts! How poor they were! How their wives and children suffered! How they trembled, strong men as they were, when asked to choose whether they would give up their deepest sense of truth and right, and have a competence, or cleave to them, and see their loved ones turned into the streets, friendless and penniless! Did they think their times good? I think not. But we look back upon that great endurance as merely the shadow in a grand picture, a reverse in a novel of whose *dénouement* we have no doubt, because we see that it was out of such misery that the phœnix of Puritanism sprang; that it was such oppression which freighted the Mayflower, and through such agony a new world was born; and the greatness of the result sheds its lustre backward upon the suffering which Queen Bess produced, and glorifies each scene of grief and heart-sickness. As we look from this hour into Robert Johnson's pent-up cell, it widens beyond the circle of the stars, and all great spirits of the past greet him as their peer; but no thanks to the times.

Neither was our own Revolution a better time than this. It was a time that tried men's souls. It was a time of division, and petty jealousies, and mean motives, and adverse fortunes. Congress was jealous of Washington, and Hancock was jealous of Washington, and Lee was jealous of Washington. The people would not provide for the army, and the army could not fight for the people. Reverse followed reverse, retreat followed retreat. Friends deserted, and turned traitors and spies. The feeble colonies were sprinkled over with Tories in communion with the enemy. Men who are halting between two opinions in their country's distress now, think there is no doubt where they would have been in the Revolution. And, indeed, there *is* no doubt our peace-men would have been Tories; and our Northern men of Southern principles would have been traitors, and some of our newspapers would have opposed Washington; others would have excused General Arnold, and so on. There were no magic charms about those days which raised men above the influence of selfish motives. They went into that war step by step, as necessity compelled, and declared themselves free and independent at last as a military necessity, no greater than that which seems to call for the emancipation of our enemies' slaves to-day. There were no braver men, nor more heroic women, then than now. Men leave their plows in the furrow, their hammers on the anvil, now as they did in the Revolution, and from as pure motives. I make no comparison now of the material changes which this age has witnessed, and of which it reaps the advantage. I speak of time as God's discipline of men and nations, and as such all time is precious, but every present time the most precious of all. I protest against this habit of attributing all great achievements to some ripeness of time, because in reality

heroism and heroes are the same always and in all times. It is easy enough to see and admire heroism in people who brave public sentiment for truth's sake, provided always that they are so far from us in time or place that our sympathy will not bring us into odium. Men will worship the heroes of history, or of Italy, at the same time they are building fires for the prophets and martyrs of to-day. The man who as governor of Massachusetts ordered Garrison's paper suppressed as a nuisance, because it advocated the cause of the oppressed in this country, goes into raptures over Garibaldi, who went into Italy and made such sad havoc among the oppressors there.

There is nothing more hopeless nor helpless than that rose-water conservatism which will not touch the hem of a hero sweating in our own streets, but sighs for those delightful days when heroes wore silken hose and silver buckles, and hacked off kings' heads without losing favor at court, and resisted oppression while courting the oppressors' daughters, and liberated slaves without losing their masters' custom. There never were such times. Heroes have always been uncomfortable people for contemporaries to get along with. They have had one idea; and it would obtrude itself upon all occasions. They would shock their friends. They would get into the doctors' seats and dispute when mere boys. They would eat and talk with unanointed people. They would go into respectable places of worship with a whip of small cords. They would not deny the truth in Pilate's judgment-hall. They would not call a wrong right when nails were driven through their hands. And when torture had done its utmost, they would cry, "Thy will be done." Now, all these things are very pleasant to talk over after the poor, lonely man has risen, and appeared to

the world in glory; but while he lives, thirsting for a drop of cordial love, the world will say, "Art thou this man's friend also?" And how many shameless ones will swear they never knew him, and then sigh for the former times, which were better than these.

"Thus we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that hath made us free,
Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while our tender spirits flee
The rude grasp of that great Impulse which drove them across the sea."

This is all false reasoning and false sentiment, which emasculates society. It is inquiring unwisely. It is missing the meaning of the past. What has come out of the former times was in them as a tree is in an acorn; but it was not visible to such men as now sigh for those times.

The Jews made much of being Abraham's children. Jesus tells them they are not Abraham's children, because they slay him; this did not Abraham. The heroes of any time are the men who see the promise of a great future in the dull routines of the present, and live and labor for them. Their labor is foolishness to the merely comfortable men of all time; but to the right-minded it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Now, the lesson this should teach us is, not impatience and disgust with the present, but the opposite. It should teach us that all the issues of the future are sprouting in the germ-cells of this hour, strengthened by all the nurture of the past. Oh! there was never such a time as this. All that has gone before us is emptied into the lap of to-day; and all that comes after us must issue from to-day. I have often wished that I had lived in this period or that of the past; but I would rather

live now than at any time since God said, "Let there be light!"

"'Tis an age on ages telling;
To be living is sublime!"

All our delays, and disappointments, and fears of complication; all our pecuniary distress and domestic sorrow, are but the birth-pangs of a higher civilization. Those who live after us will think of us as glorified by the issues which follow—as being above all murmuring and complaint. If we inquire wisely, we shall say, "No time was ever better than this time; but, O God! give us the wisdom to see and feel thy purposes in all this trial, and sorrow, and loss." Every age which is glorious in the past is pleading with us to make this age sublime. May we count every thing as dross when weighed against the possibility of freeing civilization from the thraldom of a great iniquity!

And once more. The church does not inquire wisely when she holds up a remote past as the only age of inspiration, and light, and miracle. To do this, is to judge the Christian era itself unjustly. That was its infancy, it is stronger now; that was the day of its poverty, it is richer now; that was its beginning, now we have its development. Why should we judge this religion by its childhood, when its manhood is before us? If the result proves that it has not accomplished all that was hoped for it, and promised of it, the truth should be frankly confessed. If it has accomplished more, the fact should be just as frankly admitted. At all events, it is unwise to judge it only by its promise. Christianity has accomplished *more* than it promised at first; but very differently than it promised. It did not become a theocracy, as was expected, but a republic. It did not close up the world's affairs, but it gave them a new

career. It did not remain a distinct and separate influence, but became absorbed in the great natural forces of society, and now works in a thousand unanointed ways, where it is not seen nor felt as Christianity. Its efforts to raise men above their condition, and show them the Father, have been aided immensely by all the independent developments of science, of art, of literature, and all the social enterprises and reforms. These are not the fruits of Christianity so much as its natural helps. And so the religious facilities of to-day are a thousandfold greater than they were at the introduction of Christianity. God is in the world as he never was before—in the thought of the wise and the goodness of the good.

XVI.

THE PURE IN HEART.

But most important of all is a pure heart as a condition of right thinking. I do not mean by this that the affections may or can do the work of the practical understanding, to which alone belong all the processes of forming an opinion or pronouncing a judgment. But no man can observe the sources and the strength of error without seeing that it is oftener due to the heart than the head; to false feeling than wrong thinking; to reluctance or proneness of affection than to weakness or limitation of reasoning. And, on the other hand, it is impossible to deny that the success of research depends closely upon the singleness of aim with which it is undertaken, and the fearlessness of purpose with which it is pursued. No man can hope to see God in truth—that is, to find the absolute truth—if his heart is continually casting side-glances at his personal interests. This clear on-looking of the heart is so essential to the perception of truth, that God seems to have secured it to genius by a certain obtuseness of sensibility concerning the consequences of fearless, aggressive thought.

There is no protection for us against the refractions of false affection but in the love of God, which occupies the entire mind, heart, and will. That is, unless we love the absolute and seek it; unless we are always willing to believe

that we have as yet seen but a small part of the whole truth; unless we keep the windows of our souls open to the ever-increasing brightness of the rising sun of truth, it is impossible that we should not warp our minds to do the work of justifying our prejudices and excusing our prepossessions. A great deal of what is called reasons for belief is merely excuses for belief already formed. There is no infallible action of truth upon the understanding which secures it against these biases of the heart. It is impossible for a mind to justly comprehend the testimony of the rocks when the heart is determined that they shall testify to the correctness of the Mosaic account of the creation. The mind can not understand the relation of the earth to the sun, if the heart is preoccupied by Jewish astronomy. No critical understanding can determine what the Bible actually teaches so long as the heart adores it as an infallible fetich. You remember the controversy between the dissenter and the English bishop upon the right of the Established Church to tax dissenters. The bishop was unable to see the injustice of it, and the dissenter, in despair of convincing him, took out a piece of paper and wrote on it the word "God," and said to the bishop, "Do you see that?" "Yes, to be sure I do." He then took a guinea and put it over the word, and said, "Now can you see it?" "Not through that piece of gold," was the indignant reply.

How constantly one comes upon that piece of gold between the eyes of men and God! In despair, you see the clearest arguments fly off from the fore-closed mind like hailstones from a slated roof. The bias of the heart admits only that kind of light to the mind which will make the whole world appear red, green, or blue, according as the emotional medium is. It is not always right to say that

it is willful blindness; for so subtle is this illusion, so far removed sometimes from the immediate error, that we are conscious of no insincerity, no prepossession of false love.

It is impossible, says Coleridge, for the mind to contemplate the same class of evidences for any considerable length of time without forming a judgment in their favor. And how do men determine what class of evidences they will consider? Usually by some obscure or prominent hope that such or such an opinion will be found true. A man is born in a given church. His father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all his playmates attend it. When he grows to manhood, he looks around, not for perfect truth, but for evidences to satisfy his mind with the objects which have long since satisfied his heart. Almost unconsciously to himself, he gives the most cordial welcome to that side of truth. It is wrong to accuse him of insincerity, for he may be perfectly sincere. Still, you often feel, when trying to convince his understanding, that every suggestion must go through a tangled web of prepossessions before it can reach him; every *sortie* of your logic is exposed to the cross-fire of his distrust, which lies in ambush along every entrance to his mind. Then see how that man's conviction is sometimes changed. Perhaps he loves a woman of different belief, who, even if she returns his love, will never be his wife except upon condition of his accepting her faith. With what eagerness he will look for evidences that she is right, and with what joy will he welcome any thing which favors that change upon which he imagines his whole happiness depends! At last he will find what he seeks—a belief corresponding with his love.

Or, it may be, a man's social relations become more agreeable to him in a new than in the old church, and

from that moment a new window of the soul is opened, while the other begins to close. Understand me, I am not saying that this is true in every case; nor that it is always wrong. There are multitudes in all churches whose pure hearts see God through and beyond the dogma, if not in the dogma. And in any case I am not sure that this same fore-feeling of the heart is not a perversion of nature's method of preserving the continuity of history in the masses who are incapable of independent, fearless thought. But I wish to show that there is something besides mere argument which enters into all these questions of sect and party, and to show how wisely Jesus always insisted upon a heart in love with the absolute and eternal, a pure heart given fully to God, as the condition of all right thought of truth and all right views of duty. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and with all thy will, and thy neighbor as thyself.

Again see how completely our national hopes now depend upon the purity, unselfishness, and heroic love of the people, upon the capacity of looking through all present interests and hopes to the real right. If we fail, it will not be because the issue is obscure, the right and wrong involved in uncertainty, nor because there is great doubt on which side the pure in heart may see God; but it will be because the people are so in love with peace, and ease, and par values and party ties, that they can not and will not see the plain right.

Paul describes certain lost souls as men in whom the god of this world had blinded the minds of them that believe not. And I know of none more hopelessly lost than those whose god is hidden by a golden guinea or a bale of cotton. There is no other way, except by this

shameful prepossession of the heart, of accounting for the flimsy reasons which men give for desiring to block the wheels of the administration, reasons which they will some time look back upon in astonishment and wonder how they were ever influenced by them. This man says, "My son wasn't promoted when he ought to have been—therefore the rebels are right." Another man says, "There has been mismanagement and corruption—therefore I will vote against the government!" As if one who was dissatisfied with purgatory should deliberately emigrate to hell. This is not reasoning, it is excusing; it is not the forming of opinion, but the fortifying of prejudice; it is not following the guidance of truth, but yielding to the love of ease and comfort, and worldly success.

How clear it is that, corresponding with all intellectual life, and parallel with it, there must be an emotional life, each helping and sustaining the other. From beginning to end of our development, there must be this coöperation of intellect and emotion.

In all our efforts at moral and religious culture, it should never be forgotten that men must have something to love and engage their emotions as well as something to believe and engage their intellects.

It is in vain that you try to tempt a Trinitarian out of his warm emotional home by any ghastly dissections of his Trinity or atonement. They are little more than pictures on the wall; not his substantial home-comforts. And, on the other hand, unless there is some advance of thought corresponding with each arousal of the emotions, the certain result is sentimentalism and cant. It is like stimulating the tendrils of a vine without giving it a trellis to fasten to; its very luxuriance makes it fruitless. God help us

to be pure and teachable, and fearless in pursuit of truth, that the truth may make us free indeed. God help us so to love one another as to share a common purpose and to seek a common destiny, that we may find a true and helpful fellowship! God bless to our hearts these Sunday mornings and evenings, this lovely tabernacle, this goodly friendship, our morning songs and vesper hymns, and silent prayers, that this church may be to us not only a school for our thought, but also a home for our souls!

"O friends! we need nor rock nor sand,
Nor storied stream of morning land;
We lack but open eye and ear
To find the Orient's marvels here;
The still small voice in autumn's hush,
Yon maple-wood the burning bush."

XVII.

PERSONAL RELIGION.

CHRISTENDOM has tried to import a full religious development into the character from three foreign sources: from Christ, the Bible, and the Church. In one or all of these ways have men tried to persuade themselves that there was some other way of getting religion than by being religious—some other way of getting religious strength than by religious exercise.

I am persuaded that Christ never dreamed of any such transfer of righteousness. He never thought of giving his life to men, save as they lived as he lived; nor his truth to them, save as they believed as he believed; nor his peace to them, save as they trusted as he trusted. Does he say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will *give* you rest"? It is only upon condition that they take his yoke upon them, and learn to do as he did; then they should find the rest which he had found.

Does he promise to give his life to the world? But there is always one stern condition, "This do, and thou shalt live."

Alas! to get Christ's religion is to be Christ-like. And to imitate him in the smallest things is a great deal more laborious than to believe that he was any thing—God or man. It were a rich gift, indeed, could he impute to us, in our weakness, all the religious strength which he had acquired

through so much sorrow, and love, and sacrifice, and pain, and prayer; through so much agony of doubt and joy of assurance. But it can not be. However much he might have yearned to see all whom he loved so dearly partake of his strength, and light, he could no more communicate it to them than he could give them the beauty of his eye or the majesty of his form. He alone who doeth his will can know of his doctrine. Would we possess his life, we must toil in his way. Muscular strength belongs to those who take muscular exercise; intellectual strength, to those who take intellectual exercise; religious strength, to those who take religious exercise. I can not see that this law ever is, or ever was, interfered with. Nor can I see why a physically strong man might not communicate his powerful muscles, his steady nerves, his bounding pulse, his healthful blood to a physically sick man, as easily as Christ could communicate his faith, hope, love, life, and strength to a morally sick man.

No, my friends; Christ gives us religion only as his words, his spirit, and his example encourage us to stand in awe, commune with our own hearts, and be still. The Catholic Theodore, in the fourth century, exclaimed, "Let Christ have become God, I envy him not. What he has become, I may become, by the strength of my nature."

But again we are told that we have our religion in the Bible; that we have only to accept the Bible, and we are safe. To this we answer that the Bible is entirely outside of our life, as much as any other book, and is, therefore, not our religion. It may teach us religion; but it is no measure of that which we actually possess. That we read it once, twice, or ten times a day, so long as it does not enter into the texture of our spiritual being, avails nothing.

But it can not enter our being except by spiritual assimilation. Not until we have thought it into our thought, loved it into our affection, lived it into our consciences, does it become *our* religion. I have known several of those scriptural prodigies who could repeat, it was said, the Bible from beginning to end; and, without exception, they have been unbearably stupid men, who could not give you a common-sense maxim for the business of daily life out of all their store of words. Yet, according to the theory, they should have been wonderfully religious men. When you ask men about their religion, they are wont to take the Bible in their hands and say devoutly, "Here is my religion." If I should ask you how much you weigh, you might just as well take hold of your flour-barrel and meat-barrel, and say, "Here is my weight." The nutrition which they contain will enter into the structure of your body after you have eaten, and digested, and assimilated them, and not before. So when you have read, and digested, and assimilated the Bible, the nutrition which it contains will become a part of your religious character; but not before. Take its precepts into the chambers of your soul, while the passions are still and the spirit reverent and thoughtful, and they will yield you their pearl of truth. There is no book to which this chemistry of personal thought must not be applied to distinguish truth from error. It would seem as if God had purposely mingled the two in all objects of thought, in order that the spirit of man may be challenged, at every turn in life, to live and think for himself.

And thus the moment we turn to the church and ask her to give us religion, the questions arise, "Which church?" "What kind of religion?" There are as many churches as there are views of any religious subject, each claiming

to be the true church; and hence you are thrown back upon your reason at once to distinguish the right church from the wrong one; and I really can not see that we are more likely to make a fatal mistake in trying to distinguish truth from error, than we are in trying to distinguish the right church from the wrong one. After such a beginning, how absurd is the demand which is next made upon us, that we enter the church and lay aside our reason, when it is only through reason that we could enter it at all!

Go to her as a weary child to its mother; lay aside this labor and care, and she will give you rest and peace; she will give you religion. O dear, delightful fancy of the feeble soul! How unwillingly do we learn that our spiritual mother can not always feed her growing children from her own digestion and assimilation. Milk for babes, indeed; but the strong meat for man. He must masticate and digest for himself, or it can never become a part of his spiritual muscle. It were a sweet thing indeed to go to some universal church, and so cheaply find rest in religion. But there is no such church. The moment the weary soul steps on shore to find *the* church, it is assailed by a thousand spiritual hackmen, all crying, "This way, sir!" "This way!" "Carriage, sir, to the only first-class church?" "Carriage, sir?" And it matters not which one you patronize, all the rest will laugh at you, and say that you have taken the only rickety carriage and balky horses in the lot.

Suppose we enter the church; can it give us religion any more, or in any other way, than the school can give a boy wisdom? Indeed it can not. The priest may recite our lesson for us, but it will not add at all to the sum of our attainment. We may hide ourselves amid the throng of worshipers and repeat the words of earnest men in com-

munion with their own hearts; but it will not aid us when we are called upon to account for the talents committed to our keeping. Certain eastern worshipers have a machine with which they offer their prayers; and when they want to pray, they have only to turn the machine, and bring the prayer for that day uppermost. I do not see why that is not as true a communion of the poor heathen's soul with God as is the rapid repetition of the church prayers, by which the Christian is supposed to hold communication with his God. Men are continually using these things as if they were charms, and had some power of relieving the soul from the hard work of religious culture, or of showing a shorter way to the blessed life than that by natural religious development. Do not understand me as wishing to undervalue churches, nor the Bible, nor the worth of Christ to the soul. Heaven forbid that I should do either! I would only say that the church can not give us religion; the Bible can not give us religion; Christ can not give us religion. These are all our helps, our teachers; but they are of no avail unless they lead us directly to the Father; unless they teach us to look to him daily for the law of our life, and enable us with joy to commune with our own hearts and be still. The moment we so regard all outward means, the questions of inspiration, of church authority, of apostolic succession, are practically settled. The words which feed my soul are the words of God; the church which fills me with awe, and leaves me to silent communion, is the church which has divine authority; the ministry which teaches me to live in harmony with this world and all worlds—to find God in my daily life; to feel that he is ever coming to me in the joy of my home; in the love of my loved ones; in the mercies fresh every morning and renewed every eve-

ning; in the sorrows which make me still and thoughtful; in the pleasures which make me grateful and glad; in the beauties of every season, and the wonder of every thing: the ministry which can teach me all this, is the apostolic ministry, whether it began yesterday or two thousand years ago.

The price of such a religion is unceasing vigilance. It can not be given to us, but we can find it; and it will prove to be the better part which can not be taken from us. It may not enable us to enter this church nor that; but it will enable us to stand in awe, and sin not; to commune with our own hearts, and be still.

"Seldom upon lips of mine,
Father! rests that name of thine:
Deep within my inmost breast,
In the secret place of mind,
Doth the dread idea rest!
Hushed and holy dwells it there—
Prompter of the silent prayer,
Lifting up my spirit's eye,
And its faint but earnest cry
From its dark and cold abode,
Unto thee, my guide and God!"

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